THE NON-OFFICIAL BRITISH IN INDIA, 1883-1920.

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ABSTRACT

The history of India from the mid-1880's to independence was at one time presented as a straightforward struggle for power between Hindu and Muslim nationalists and British officialdom. Of late there has been more attention to the complexities of the Indian side of that struggle - the pulls of provincialism, the emergence of new leaderships as the levels at which politics operated were altered, Muslim divisions between those who saw Pakistan as a threat to religious life and those who saw it as its precondition. But there has been less attention to the British side - scarcely any, indeed, to the role played by the small but influential non-official British [European] community in India.

It is the purpose of this thesis to throw light on the political, economic, social and religious activities of this complex non-official community, on its composition and its performance as a pressure group from the years immediately precedent to the founding of the Indian National Congress to the Montagu-Chelmsford era. The prologue reviews in outline the community's development down to the 1880's, Chapter II discusses the emergence of the community's political arm - the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association - in 1883 as a result of the Ilbert Bill controversy, and the next chapter the later roles of this association down to the beginning of the twentieth century. Chapter IV examines the impact of the business segment of the community and Chapter V discusses constitutional, civil service and later Defence Association developments - all down to World War I. The final chapter provides a broad analysis of the community's activities over the years 1914 to 1920.

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PREFACE

Like others before me I acquired my first vision of India from schoolboy reading of Kipling and of enthralling tales of forays against the wild Pathans on the North West Frontier. For an Indian met with on a train on my first visit to India it had apparently been the opening sentence of his English reader: 'The sun never sets upon the British Empire' which had formed his visionary image. In either case the images were of an imperial structure, the world of district officers, pioneer engineers and of a British-led Indian Army. It was only later that Surendrenath Banerjea's A Nation in Making revealed that there had been other figures and elements in the India of the Raj. And it was later again - coming back to the academic world from that of accountancy and business management - that I was struck with the absence from the usual picture of the British in India, of considerable non-official elements from their own community: businessmen and planters, the Eurasians, lawyers and missionaries. It is these elements, and their roles in India in the epic years from 1883 to 1920 which saw the birth and growth to power of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, which form the subject of this study.

When I began work upon the thesis I was quickly struck by the further fact that though the major archives and libraries in this country connected with the history of British India have massive holdings on governmental activities, whether civil or military, they are very lacking in records relating to the non-official British community in India - whence perhaps the comparative neglect of that community by historians. Much the same situation is to be found in India also. It has thus been necessary to assemble much of the material on which this thesis is based from the variety of non-official bodies and associations in Britain which were connected with India, and to travel very extensively in India to tap the records of business firms and associations, of schools, churches and clubs, and in some few instances the personal memories of individuals. The range of sources, which was

very extensive, which I tapped in India has been indicated in a brief survey, published by the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies.[1] Though presented in summary form, the survey does indicate just how much is available and deserving of investigation.

The absence of any considerable body of earlier research upon the non-official British community in India in its various elements in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the wide scatter of the sources bearing upon the activities of the community posed a problem of choice of approach. One would have been to select a small portion of the whole - the coal owners and mine-managers for example, whose activities C.P. Simmons has worked upon, or the great Managing Agencies which have been studied by A.K. Bagchi, or to study a single region only. The other was to attempt a really broad study which would set the many components of the non-official community in their relationship to one another and to the India in which they worked. At this point, with the grasp of the range of the subject brought home by a most strenuous nine months research leave in India, I have thought the latter course the more worthwhile.

This study then, while concerned with the activities of tea planters or missionaries, does not purport to provide a history of the tea industry in India or of any particular body of missionaries. And by extension it does not purport to be an economic, educational, religious, political or social history of the period either. What it does set out to do is to establish the composition of the British non-official community in the forty years in question, to study their activities in a great variety of worlds - commercial, professional, missionary, educational - and in particular to demonstrate the manner in which the members of the community organised themselves and operated as interest or pressure groups in a period notable for dramatic change in the economic and political life of India. In pursuing this central aim, it has also been necessary to

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1. Raymond K. Renford, Archival and Library sources for the study of the activities of the non-official British community in India: a brief survey., London, 1976.

review the development of the British non-official community prior to the 1880s and to consider its relations with two other groups - that of the domiciled Europeans and Eurasians in India and that looser body consisting of the Britain-based extensions of the community, the headquarters of business firms operating in India or the parent Societies which sent missionaries to the Indian field, for example. As in the official world information and decisions shuttled between Britain and India, so too in the non-official world.

The spread in time and place of the study here attempted, and the sheer bulk of the sources put under contribution have posed many problems.[1] It is hoped, however, that it will have at least assisted the process by which simple schoolboy pictures are given the depth and complexity of the adult world.

The numerous librarians, archivists, church, school, club, business and association officers as well as individuals who so willingly helped me in India, where I visited nearly one hundred representative bodies, giving permission to work upon material in their possession, have already been thanked in my published bibliography, but I would take this opportunity to thank them once again for their help. For assistance given in Britain and for the patient response accorded to my many queries, I would thank Miss J.C. Lancaster and her staff at the India Office Library and Records, Mr B.C. Bloomfield and Mr R.C. Dogra of the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, the Director and staff of the British Library in Bloomsbury and especially the Deputy Superintendent and his staff at its Newspaper Library in Colindale, and the Librarians and staff at the University Libraries in London and Cambridge. In the non-official field I would first particularly wish to thank again Sir Percival Griffiths, and Mr B.P.F. Alcock of the Indian Tea Association (London) in

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1. Despite the voluminousness of the source materials, the records concerning individual associations - the Behar Indigo Planters' Association, the Bombay Trades Associations and many of the Eurasian Associations - were often tantalizingly fragmentary and incomplete.

whose offices I worked extensively. For work done at their premises and elsewhere upon their archives I am also grateful to the Archivists, Librarians, Secretaries and Officers of the Church Missionary Society, the Baptist Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Salvation Army, the Society of Jesus, the Central Catholic Library, Jews College and the London Chamber of Commerce.

I have also to express my gratitude to the Social Science Research Council for the award which enabled me to undertake this research and to the University of London and the School of Oriental and African Studies for their financial assistance.

ABBREVIATIONS

Community and Welfare Associations:

EA	European Association
EAIDA or Defence Association	European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association
EDA or Defence Association	European Defence Association
EurAIA	Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association
NIA	National Indian Association

Commercial Associations:

B[I]PA	Behar (Indigo) Planters' Association
BMA	Bombay Mill-owners' Association
C/Comm	Chamber of Commerce
CTA	Calcutta Trade(s') Association
IJMA	(Indian Jute Manufactures (Association (Indian Jute Mills' Association
IMA	Indian Mining Association
ITA	Indian Tea Association
ITA(L)	Indian Tea Association (London)
UPASI	United Planters' Association of Southern India

Missionary Societies and Orders:

BMS	Baptist Missionary Society
CMS	Church Missionary Society
LMS	London Missionary Society
SJEngProv	Society of Jesus English Province
SPCK	Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

Other:

C.	Collection
Ind. Hist. Cong. Progs.	India History Congress Proceedings
Ind.[MPD]	India. [Miscellaneous Public Documents]
J.&P.	Judicial and Public Dept. papers
LEC	Labour Enquiry Commission
Leg.Cl.progs.	Legislative Council proceedings
Leg.Progs.	Legislative Proceedings
L/Parl	Parliamentary Branch papers
P.	Papers
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers
P.P.H.C.	Parliamentary Papers House of Commons
P.P.H.L.	Parliamentary Papers House of Lords
SIPEC	South of India Planters' Enquiry Committee
StMMPr	Statement of Moral and Material Progress ...
Rev. & Agric. Progs.	Revenue and Agriculture Proceedings
Rev. Progs.	Revenue Proceedings

CHAPTER I
PROLOGUE

Writing to the Government of India in 1834 about the recently enacted Charter Act, the Court of Directors pointed out that the Act 'unsealed for the first time the doors of British India to the British Subjects of European birth'. The small non-official British community[1] in India had now 'acquired a right, however qualified, to live in the country', where 'hitherto the English in India have been there only on sufferance'.[2] Those whom the monopolist Company had long denounced as 'interlopers' or had grudgingly admitted under licence as free merchants, liable to deportation at the Company's pleasure, could now enter India and work there as of right, unrestricted since the Charter Acts of 1813 and 1833 by any commercial monopoly of the Company. (For missionaries 1813 had been the vital year when the ban upon their entry had been lifted.) The long struggle against the monopoly of the East India Company was over.

That struggle left its mark, however, for though the non-official Europeans as traders, managers of Agency Houses, planters or mine owners were often the necessary if unacknowledged partners in the activities of the East India Company, and though the Company had provided first the corporate commercial and then the governmental structure within which such Europeans operated, there had always been a latent or overt distrust and antagonism between them. Until 1833 commercial competition had been an open cause of conflict, but both before then and on beyond the point at which the Company provided the government of British India, there was a potential conflict between the needs of British commerce and industry in India, or the aims of the missionary, and those of the Government of India as an imperial power ruling a vast non-European population.

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1. The term refers to that portion of the United Kingdom born community in India who were not in the civil, military or naval employ of the East India Company or the British Government.

2. India Public Department Despatch No. 44 in India & Bengal Despatches Nov. 1834 to Feb. 1835, III, 422.

The need for co-operation and the possibilities of conflict grew as the non-official community expanded in size and importance from the 2,150 non-official Europeans in British India recorded in 1830, to the 10,000 odd of 1851[1] and to the 70,000 British,[2] 8,000 European and 1,000 American, Canadian and Australasian-born non-officials recorded at the 1871 Census. (To which ought to be added 94,000 Eurasians, 30,000 'others of European blood' and 20,000 of 'mixed race'.)[3] As their numbers grew and as they spread out into the mofussil as indigo, tea and coffee planters, colliery owners, railwaymen or mill-owners - assisted by the post-Dalhousie revolution in communications - the size of their economic stake in India rapidly expanded and so did the value of their contribution to the British structure of international trade.[4] But that expansion involved the community even more closely with Indian society as rivals with Indian zamindars for authority in the countryside if they were planters[5] and often at odds as employers of labour with the Indian work force which they recruited and controlled. The non-official Europeans claimed from those who governed British India the privileges due to fellow countrymen[6] and the support, in such matters as enforcement of contracts or the provision of improved communications, due to British entrepreneurs. And to press their claims they proceeded to organise themselves - in Trades Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Planter and Mill-owners Associations, in

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1. P.P.H.C.1831, V, 238, answer 2791; P.P.H.C.1852, X, 351. The UK-born non-officials formed only the most prominent part of such 'Europeans'.

2. UK-born 22,000, domiciled 45,000 and those born elsewhere 3,500.

3. Calculations based, with adjustment, upon Census of England and Wales. For the Year 1871., IV, General Report, 304-9, Memorandum on the Census of British India of 1871-72., [C-1349.], 29,53-55 in P.P. 1875, LIV, and J.C. Compton, British Government and Society in the Presidency of Bengal, c. 1858 - c. 1880...., 5,6

4. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 both stimulated progress in such trade and the growth of the community in India by cutting down the journey time between Britain and India.

5. See C. Palit, Tensions in Bengal Rural Society, 114-117.

6. Basically the right to be tried only by a European or by a European jury.

some cases linked with important pressure groups in Britain, as for example the missionaries were.

The Government of India for its part was concerned to eliminate the worst abuses in the recruitment of labour, to prevent the disorders which an oppressive system of European indigo planting encouraged,[1] to curb missionary zeal which alarmed and antagonised both Hindus and Muslims, and to eradicate European legal privileges which often proved open to abuse.[2]

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century the tensions between Government, the non-official European community and an increasingly articulate Indian society which the ambivalence of official - non-official European relationships generated, were coming to a head.

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1. See B.B. Kling, The Blue Mutiny.

2. As for example in the case of R.A. Fuller a British barrister at Agra who had been fined thirty rupees by a European magistrate after Fuller's groom, whom he had struck, died of his injuries. Government had sought to limit or eradicate the Europeans' legal privileges in 1836, 1849 and 1857. By the Black Act of 1836 Europeans were brought under the jurisdiction of native judges for civil suits in the mofussil. The attempt of Government in the 1840s to further reduce the Europeans' privileges was unsuccessful and that of the 1850s - interrupted by the Mutiny - was quietly dropped in 1861. At the next substantive attempt, in 1872, (see chapter II below), a Compromise settlement was reached.

CHAPTER II

EMERGENCE OF THE DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

The post-Mutiny growth in the size and economic significance of the non-official community in India had been matched, as noted, by a growth in capacity to mobilise and voice opinion. The nomination of British non-officials to the Legislative Councils of of the Governor-General and the three Presidencies and the care taken to consult or use leading community figures - as in the Ashley Eden Tariff Committee of 1860 - had been a recognition of the fact. Government had been generous in its grant of lands to tea and coffee planters, loth to intervene as the missionary body had urged for the protection of the ryot, cautious in its approach towards the plantation labour problem, and ready to defer to the community by abolishing income tax. Above all Government had been careful not to push home legal changes which touched the racialist nerve of the community. As the editor of the Englishman put it on 30 January 1872, 'Criminal Procedure is a matter on which English residents in India have always been sensitive'. As has been seen, this had been made plain in the Black Act controversies of the 1830's, late 1840's, 1850's and early 1860 - and Government's reaction following the first Black Act had been to bow to the community's voiced displeasure. Only in persisting in the abolition of Grand Juries under Act XIII of 1865, as advised by Sir Henry Maine, the Law Member of Council, had Government chosen to brave the storm,[1] and that was over an issue which was symbolic rather than substantive. (Sir Arthur Hobhouse remarked that the Act 'deprived them[2] of a distinction and filled them with vague apprehensions of mischief to come').[3]

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1. W. Stokes, The Anglo-Indian Codes, II, 2 note, A.H. Haggard, 'Europeans and Natives in India', Contemporary Review, Aug. 1883, 277.

2. The community.

3. A. Hobhouse, 'Last words on Mr. Ilbert's Bill', Contemporary Review, Sept. 1883, 400 note. See also the confession 'to an instinctive apprehension' by the non-official Additional Member J.N. Bullen (partner in merchants Kettlewell, Bullen & Co.) in Leg. Cl. progs. 20.3.1865, IV, 124.

But the influx of Europeans and their movement up country in growing numbers made it an increasingly 'intolerable inconvenience' that for even comparatively petty criminal offences they could only be tried in the High Court of one of the Presidency towns.[1] When the Code of Criminal Procedure brought into force in 1862 came under review in 1871 along with its amending Acts,[2] Government proposed an extension of the powers of mofussil courts in criminal causes involving Europeans. But warned by G.H.P. Evans the Calcutta lawyer and community spokesman, (as he later recalled), that though 'moderate and sensible men' fully recognised the need for change, any move to give Indian judges or magistrates jurisdiction over Europeans must lead to 'a fierce agitation by the European British', Government avoided any confrontation.[3] The Law Member (Sir) Fitzjames Stephen and the acting Governor-General, Sir John Strachey, informally proposed to the community's representative in the Legislative Council that if the community would agree to a limited extension of the jurisdiction of mofussil criminal courts over Europeans, Government for its part 'would agree that no Natives ... should have power to try European British subjects'. The European community assenting, 'the arrangement was introduced in the report and resolution of the Select Committee',[4] and came before the Legislative Council on 30 January 1872. After rejection of an attempt by B.H. Ellis, a Government Member, to amend its terms and allow competent native magistrates in the mofussil to have criminal jurisdiction over Europeans,[5] the Compromise passed into law ensuring that to European British subjects alone would criminal jurisdiction over Europeans be granted.[6] It was a gratifying

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1. J.F. Stephen, the Law Member in the early 1870's, emphasised the immense amount of trouble and expense involved in such procedure, (Leg. Cl. progs. 30.1.1872, XI, 76).

2. XXXIII of 1861, XV of 1862, VIII of 1866, and VIII of 1869, see Stokes, II, 1.

3. See Council speech 9.3.1883 of G.H.P. Evans, Leg. Cl. progs. XXII, 149, 150.

4. Ibid., 151.

5. Leg. Cl. progs. 16.4.1872, XI, 413-27. Ellis, who had served previously on the Bombay Council, was noted for his sympathetic relationships with all classes of Indians.

6. For discussion on this Compromise see S. Gopal, The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon 1880-1884, 125-7. See also page 10 below for the definition of a European British subject, retained in later legislation.

parting-shot so to speak for Stephen, who left the country two days later,[1] and only 'common decency' in the eyes of the Englishman.[2]

Moderately acceptable as the 1872 Compromise was to the non-official British community at the time, it soon gave grounds for irritation. Hobhouse, then serving in India, wrote of his 'astonishment at the unreasonable outburst' of the Anglo-Indian community in the Meares case in the Jessore district of Bengal in 1874[3] - and noted 'this was a crime which two years before could have been committed with impunity'.[4] However when Act IX of 1874 deprived European vagrants of their Compromise privileges as a badge of disgrace[5] their non-official countrymen were not prepared to be over-concerned on their behalf.[6] Nor did the Presidency Magistrates' Act, IV of 1877, which regulated the procedure and increased the jurisdiction of presidency town magistrates' courts,[7] and thereby vested Indian magistrates in such towns with criminal jurisdiction over Europeans, cause much alarm. This was principally because the existence of a large non-official British community and its lawyers and the High Court all close to hand were considered sufficient warning to Indian magistrates to keep their place. 'If they [the British] accept the native magistrate in the Presidency town', it was stated, 'it is because there they are surrounded by thousands of public-spirited compatriots, who, they are sure, would never allow them to be injured'.[8] The later Criminal Procedure Code Act, Act X of 1882, also provoked no protest. It was a consolidating measure, combining the

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1. L. Stephen, The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, 297.
2. Englishman, 6.2.1872.
3. In 1874 Gerald Meares, an indigo planter who had brutally beaten a native postman, was sentenced to two months' imprisonment.
4. A. Hobhouse, 'Sir Arthur Hobhouse on the Native Jurisdiction Bill', Pall Mall Budget 16.3.1883.
5. Gopal, 127.
6. When in 1883 the vagrant Bryant was tried and sentenced in Calcutta by the native magistrate Behari Lal Gupta, the Council of the newly formed European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association decided 'it was not a case in which the Association could interfere'.
7. W. Stokes, II, 3, points out that the 1872 Criminal Procedure Code had been inapplicable to such courts.
8. Minute 15.5.1882 by D.F. Carmichael, (Ordinary Member of Madras Council), in P.P. 1883, LI, [C.-3512.], 657.

substance of the High Courts' Act of 1875 and the Presidency Magistrates' Act of 1877 with the 1872 Code, so at last to give to India 'a single and complete Code of Criminal Procedure'.[1] Since the new Code embodied the 1872 Compromise, the sensitive area of mofussil criminal jurisdiction remained, for the moment at least, untouched.

Untouched perhaps, but, behind the scenes not unbroached, for in a note of 30 January 1882, Behari Lal Gupta, a Calcutta presidency magistrate, urged on by Romesh Chunder Dutt the District Officer of Bankura,[2] had drawn attention to the anomalous position in which the native members of the Covenanted Civil Service were placed by the 1872 Compromise enshrined in the Criminal Procedure Code. It was an 'invidious distinction' Gupta argued, and he proposed that Native district magistrates and sessions judges in the mofussil should be accorded the powers denied them by the Compromise. Gupta's Note,[3] supported by the Legislative Council member Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore, came to the Viceroy Ripon's attention via W. Stokes the Law Member on 8 February and was well received.[4] The plea was re-iterated in a British Indian Association memorial of 27 February[5] and raised in Select Committee by Tagore, who proposed moving an amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code Bill, then before Council. To Tagore however it was suggested that 'it would be entirely impossible to take up a question of such magnitude' at this closing stage of the Bill. Tagore accordingly dropped his amendment on the Viceroy's promise that Government would give consideration thereto without delay once the new Code had been

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1. W. Stokes, II, 3, 4.

2. J.N. Gupta, The Life and Work of Romesh Chunder Dutt, 93. This action of Dutt, a future Indian National Congress President, appears to have been largely overlooked by historians.

3. The Note appears in P.P. 1883, LI, 653-4. For Dutt's later official opinion on the issue reflecting the viewpoint he had urged on Gupta, see P.P. 1884, LX, [C.-3877.], 311-13.

4. Stokes to Ripon 8.2.1882 and Ripon to Stokes 8.2.1882, in Ind.[MPD], BP7/6, 48, 81, 82.

5. For text see Statesman 28.2.1882. The memorial leaned on Gupta's Note and spoke of the 'invidious distinction'.

passed.[1] Ripon, replying to Durga Charan Laha[2] in the Council meeting of 2 March, declared that to take up the thirty-third chapter of the Bill - 'that special chapter, which regulates the procedure with regard to Europeans and Americans ... would be to deal with very difficult and very delicate questions',[3] and unwilling to act without very full consideration he brushed aside the sensitive question and pushed the new Code through.[4]

At Stokes's request the Bengal Government had conveniently held back Gupta's Note[5] but Ripon having left it 'perfectly open to reconsider any other portion of this code at any time'[6] Bengal now forwarded it on 20 March. Sir Ashley Eden's opinion given in the covering letter was that 'the time has now arrived when all native members of the Covenanted Civil Service should be relieved of such restrictions of their powers as are imposed on them by Chapter XXXIII. of the new Code of Criminal Procedure, or when at least native covenanted civilians who have attained the position of district magistrate or sessions judge should have entrusted to them full powers over all classes, whether European or native, within their jurisdictions',[7] and such opinion provided a weighty backing for the Government to move in the matter. For not only had Eden been five years in charge of Bengal so that he knew the province intimately, but, (despite the name that he bore), it was known that there was nothing particularly liberal or sentimental about him.[8] Accordingly the Indian Government now sought the early reactions of the Local Governments to Eden's

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1. Ripon to the Marquis of Hartington (Secretary of State) 8.9.1882, Ind.[MPD], BP7/3, 227, and Council speech of Ripon 9.3.1883 in Leg. Cl. progs. XXII, 224.

2. Indian merchant and landowner, President British Indian Association 1885 and 1895.

3. Leg. Cl. progs. 1882, XXI, 150-1.

4. Ibid., 141-153. The question of authorising Natives to be Justices of the Peace in the mofussil had been raised by the Bengal Government in August 1880 but rejected in June 1881 by the Viceroy's Executive Council, see Notes 1.6. and 22.6.1881 in Ripon P., XCIII, Add. MSS. 43583, 42-3.

5. Sir Ashley Eden to Evans 6.4.1883, Ind.[MPD], BP7/3, 277. Eden had been Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in the spring of 1882.

6. Leg. Cl. progs. 1882, XXI, 153.

7. P.P. 1883, LI, 653.

8. Ripon to Viscount Halifax (the former Sir Charles Wood) 6.3.1883, Ind.[MPD], BP7/5, 36.

suggestion in order to synchronise any law amendment found necessary with the coming into force of the new Code on 1 January 1883.[1]

By late August 1882 all the replies to the Circular which had gone out to the Local Governments at the end of April had come in.[2] Not much attention was paid to the Minute of the Madras Council member Carmichael that 'the British lion, a vulgar brute, no doubt', would wag his tail and roar if the Government tried to adopt Gupta's suggestion, nor to that of his colleague Hudleston[3] who was confident that the implementation of such a proposal 'would raise an outcry'.[4] With the 'insignificant exception of Coorg' as Ripon was fond of putting it,[5] all the Local Governments in India in varying terms favoured the proposed amendment of the existing law, whilst, in the Executive Council, only Lieutenant-General Wilson was opposed to all change in the law.[6] Ripon proposed therefore to Hartington, the Secretary of State, in a despatch of 9 September,[7] the removal from the Statute Book 'at once and completely', of every judicial qualification which was based 'merely on race distinctions and the supposed personal privileges of the dominant caste'. Hartington, agreeing that the time for action had come, sanctioned the change on 7 December 1882.[8]

So it was, that on Friday 2 February 1883, Courtenay Peregrine Ilbert, still new in office as Law Member[9] and all unsuspecting of the Pandora's box he was opening, rose in the Legislative Council to move for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1882. Government was of the

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1. P.P. 1883, LI, 649.

2. For Local Government correspondence see ibid. 653-68.

3. William Hudleston, like Carmichael, was an Ordinary Member of the Madras Council.

4. Minutes of D.F. Carmichael and W. Hudleston 15, 16.5.1882, P.P. 1883, LI, 657-8.

5. See Ripon to Hartington 8.9.1882, Ind.[MPD], BP7/3, 228, and to Gladstone 24.3.1883, Gladstone P. CCII, Add. MSS. 44287, 1.

6. Ripon to Hartington 8.9.1882.

7. Government of India. - Home Department. Judicial. No. 33 of 1882, in P.P. 1883, LI, 649-52.

8. Judicial Despatch No. 33, 7.12.1882, in P.P. 1883, LI, 668.

9. He had taken over from Whitley Stokes on 11 May 1882.

opinion, he stated, that the 1872 Compromise might 'with safety, and ought in justice, to be reconsidered', and accordingly Government proposed to repeal the limitation whereby the exercise of jurisdiction over British subjects was restricted to persons who were European British subjects themselves.[1] It was proposed further 'that every district magistrate and sessions judge shall be, by virtue of his office, a justice of the peace, and, as such, capable of exercising jurisdiction over European British subjects'. (Thus Native district magistrates and sessions judges in the mofussil were to have, as Gupta had suggested, criminal jurisdiction over the European British there).[2] Local governments, as Ilbert explained, were furthermore to be given discretionary power to invest certain other persons with the office of justice of the peace and consequently with jurisdiction over European British subjects.[3] Council members' reactions were mixed. Tagore, attending his last Legislative Council, expressed his gratitude on behalf of his Native countrymen for Ripon's redemption of his promise. G.H.P. Evans, the English barrister member - who was the brother-in-law of a leading indigo planter[4] - was, by contrast, less enthusiastic. Having heard that day, for the first time, what the proposed measure was, his reaction must be blunt: 'There was nothing which was more dear to any man, and more especially to an Englishman, than his liberty, and nothing which he was more jealous of than any change in the tribunal which could deprive him of that liberty in a moment'. The question

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1. The expression 'European British subject' was defined by Section 4(u) of Act X of 1882 as:
(1) any subject of Her Majesty born, naturalized or domiciled in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or in any of the European, American or Australian Colonies or Possessions of Her Majesty, or in the Colony of New Zealand, or in the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope or Natal;
(2) any child or grand-child of any such person by legitimate descent.

2. For the differentiation in duties of district magistrates and sessions judges see StMMPr 1882-83, 69.

3. P.P. 1883, LI, [C.-3545.], 675, 678-9. The discretionary powers could be invested in persons being a) a member of the Covenanted Civil Service, b) a Member of the Native Civil Service constituted under the statutory rules, c) an assistant commissioner in a non-regulation province, or d) a cantonment magistrate.

4. Ripon to Kimberley 2.4.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3 98. The Earl of Kimberley had succeeded Hartington as Secretary of State in December 1882.

was a vexed one, he pointed out, and the debate on the motion ought to be postponed until the widely scattered non-official British in India had been given time to make their voices heard.[1] Ripon, who was expecting some opposition[2] acquiesced. The lengthy debate on the new Bill - it was to come to be known colloquially as the Ilbert Bill or Ilbert's Bill - took place therefore on 9 March, just over a month later. By that time a non-official British political organisation, the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association, had been formed, a direct result and clamant voice of the agitation aroused in the interim.

The fight between the non-official British and the Government over the Ilbert Bill - the main focus of interest for the community's newly-formed political association - was to be waged, both in India and Britain, for approaching a full year. The bitter contest waxed and waned in intensity over the period, but may be divided, as will be seen, into four distinct phases: from 6 February to 5 August 1883, from 6 August to 15 November, from 15 November to December 21, and the final, fourth phase from 22 December, when a Concordat was reached, till 25 January 1884 when a much watered-down Ilbert Bill passed into law. In Britain, where reactions tended to follow in the wake of those in India, three phases may be discerned - events of 14 March to 30 September, from 1 October to 22 November, and 23 November to 21 December 1883. Though the phases overlap and blur at the edges they will be used as a framework for the analysis which follows.

Though the Bill was brought in in India, it was in England, not India, that the new measure first caught the attention of the public. The man who raised the warning cry - and thereby initiated the bitter contest - was R.C. Macgregor the Times correspondent in Calcutta, whose weekly telegrams appeared in that paper on Mondays, and were read with particular interest since no other English paper maintained its own regular correspondent there.[3] Macgregor was an expatriate Britisher described by Ripon

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1. P.P. 1883, LI, 679-80. The 'liberty' in question represented the non-official British claim throughout the Ilbert Bill controversy to possession (via the Magna Carta) of an inalienable birthright of being tried by their own peers, namely by their fellow-countrymen.

2. Ripon to Northbrook 5.2.1883, Ind.[MPD], BP7/5, 19.

3. Gopal, 151.

as a 'small Calcutta Barrister'.[1] Having been in Calcutta when the 1872 Compromise was secured he was quick to note any attempt to upset the arrangement then agreed. He lived at the Bengal Club[2] and in Ripon's eyes represented only the feelings and prejudices of the narrow set of lawyers, picking up all his Indian news from the Club and the Bar Library.[3] Rejecting the offer of correct information from the Government on any subject which he might want[4] Macgregor preferred his own brand of journalistic sensationalism. 'Government without any warning of its intention', announced his Calcutta telegram in the Times on Monday 5 February 'has suddenly sprung a mine on the European community'. Government was proposing taking a very grave step, he warned: false witnesses and native judicial officials in the mofussil armed with extended powers together would deal a 'death blow' to the tea, coffee and indigo planting industries, and new investment projects for mining, railways and so forth would be nipped in the bud. He could assert 'without hesitation', the cable said, that should the proposed change in the law be effected, it would be 'unsafe for any Englishman to reside outside the limits of the three Presidency towns'.[5] The Times leader of the same day pronounced: 'Lord Ripon would do well to pause before proceeding further with a Bill as likely to be mischievous as the one on which he is at present engaged'. Taking its cue from the Times, the Daily Telegraph of 7 February spoke of the Viceroy's 'spurious generosities' as exampled in 'this needless abandonment of European liberty to native jurisdiction'. It looked to the good sense and prudence of Kimberley the new Secretary of State to put a check on Lord Ripon's 'breathless benevolence'.

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1. Ripon to Northbrook 5.3.1883, Ind.[MPD], BP7/5, 34.

2. Bengal Club Cttee progs. 4.5.1883 mention: 'Submitted Mr. Platt's Estimate for laying Gas in Mr. Macgregor's Chambers'.

3. Ripon to Northbrook 5.3.1883, 34. In 1882 and 1883 Macgregor was on the Club Committee.

4. Ripon to Northbrook ibid.

5. Bishop Henry Whitehead, in Indian Problems in Religion Education Politics, 205-6, conceded that utilisation of false witnesses was common practice in Bengal courts in the 1880's, 'but an Indian magistrate was not more likely to be deceived in cases of this kind than a European'.

From London these views were quickly flashed back to India, where on Tuesday 6 February the Englishman was the first paper to sound the alarm. Ilbert's Council speech the previous Friday, that paper noted, had 'fallen like a thunderbolt among the European subjects of Her Majesty in this country'. By that evening however, when the important annual dinner of the Calcutta Trades' Association took place,[1] the implications of the new Bill had not sunk in among the majority of the non-officials present, and Ripon, who was the first Viceroy ever to grace such a meeting with his presence, was loudly cheered.[2] In the next two days the Englishman amplified its first warning by giving more critical publicity to the new measure and other European community papers took notice as well. The feelings at home among Anglo-Indians of wide experience, it was telegraphed, was one of alarm and they wholly condemned the proposed reform.[3] When Ilbert formally introduced the new Bill in the Legislative Council on 9 February, the community's newspapers, their eyes opened by reactions at home, gave closer attention to the new proposal than they had when reporting Legislative proceedings a week earlier. 'Leave well alone' was the Civil and Military Gazette's advice on 12 February to India's legislators.

Opposition to the Bill in India set off towards the end of the first week of February by such warnings from the newspapers, themselves encouraged by the news from home,[4] had already begun to gather strength by the middle of the month. In the next few days, from the 16th to the 19th, it came out into the open, and from then onwards grew rapidly to serious proportions. The high point of the initial wave of opposition (and indeed of the opposition campaign as a whole) was reached with a massive public

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1. The Calcutta correspondent of the Times compared the dinner to the great banquets in London's Guildhall, for it was the only occasion, (the St. Andrew's Day dinner excepted), when the highest officials and leading non-officials met together and addressed speeches not so much to the gathering as to the Indian public at large. See Times 12.2.1883.

2. The meeting is reported in Englishman, 10.2.1883.

3. Englishman 7, 8.2.1883, Pioneer 7, 8.2.1883, Times of India 7.2.1883.

4. S.R. Mehrotra, The Emergence of the Indian National Congress, 341.

protest meeting against the Bill at the Calcutta Town Hall on 28 February which demonstrated and emphasised that there was a force with which Government had to reckon. The impetus given by that meeting carried through into early March, reinforced by the holding of protest meetings in other areas by other groups - some twenty seven meetings being held in the first eight days of the month. The news of this early, wide opposition coupled with the holding of the important Legislative Council debate on the Bill on 9 March, which marked the overall climax of the first period of opposition, kept up the impetus awhile - some thirty further protest meetings being held down to 19 March - but thereafter the first burst of protest meetings died away, and correspondence and publicity in the newspapers also declined steadily in their turn. There was then a lull until August, a lull which coincided of course with the hot weather, and with the movement of the Government of India to Simla, where Ripon, out of sight, seems also to have been out of mind.

The opposition to the Bill in India in these first few weeks set the pattern for the future. Geographically Calcutta took the lead from the start and remained at the centre of the movement throughout, containing as it did the greatest concentration of European numbers and capital at the seat of Imperial government. The strongest sustained mofussil support came from its hinterland Bengal, Behar and Assam, other areas of India following well behind. Operationally there was a three-fold sequence. Firstly there was mobilisation of public opinion through the European community Press, then the organisation of institutional opposition, marked outstandlingly by the formation in early March of the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association,[1] the body which thereafter assumed the leadership of the campaign, and thirdly there was the expression of that opposition in Council, at public meetings and at other points of contact with officialdom. Such stages of course were not self-contained but rather interacted with each other, as when reports in the Press of protest or Legislative Council meetings produced fresh correspondence on the Bill in the papers or the holding of further protest meetings in places not hitherto involved. Furthermore, as the opposition

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1. Referred to in short in this work as the EAIDA or the Defence Association.

movement took shape in this early period, various European and allied groups were to join in the countrywide protest for their own particular reasons.

The mobilisation of public opinion against the Bill in the Press was begun by leaders and editorial comments on the scanty official information available, but was then carried forward by reports of protest meetings (held or projected), remonstrances, Defence Association activity, and relevant news-items from Britain, and by the publication of readers' letters on the issue with further comment. Initially news was distinguishable from views, but soon views themselves became news - acting reciprocally on one another. In such multi-form publicity, the Englishman in Calcutta, owned by J. O'Brien Saunders and edited so pungently by James W. Furrell, was in a class of its own at the head of the European community's campaign. Not only was it the first paper into the fray, but it attracted readers' correspondence on the Bill on a scale which marked it out as the dominant force in Press opposition to the Bill.[1] The first reader's letter was published in the Englishman on 10 February along with editorial comment on Eden's support for the Gupta note. When three days later the paper published the Official Correspondence of 1882 on the proposed new measure, there were additional letters from readers on the issue, and thereafter, aided by more leaders, the Englishman could print a regular flow of readers' letters on the subject. By 19 February two of the three European newspapers in Calcutta were ranked against the Bill, for while Robert Knight's paper the Statesman under the management and editorship of W. Riach continued to support Government on the issue,[2] the hitherto pro-Government Indian Daily News - edited by S.E.J. Clarke - worried about the threatened loss of European advertising revenue - moved from a trimming stance on 19 February to outright opposition on the 21st, opposing the Bill, so Ripon reported, with

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1. Whilst letters on the Bill in other of the community's newspapers were relatively few in number, the Englishman published some 600 readers' letters in the period of the campaign. Out of these a mere five European correspondents supported the Bill.

2. See Statesman 13, 27.2.1883, and S. Ghosh, 'The Racial Question and Liberal English Opinion as reflected in the Friend of India, from the Mutiny to the Ilbert Bill', in Bengal Past and Present 1962, LXXXI, No. 151, 62.

'furious and reckless zeal'.[1] A similar change-round was recorded at the start of March by the Athenaeum in Madras,[2] though the Madras Mail until even later remained extremely lukewarm in its protest.[3] From Allahabad the Pioneer meanwhile was coming out strongly against the Bill,[4] and in Lahore the Civil and Military Gazette attacked the need for the new measure in terms which grew stronger as the wealth of opposition in India became apparent.[5] In Bombay the Times of India tended initially to remain aloof from the whole controversy, contenting itself with reproducing telegrams from Britain on the Bill and reporting official and non-official news in India on the subject in a detached manner. From around the third week of February though, this paper, 'under orders from its principal proprietor who [was] in England' opposed the Bill.[6] To the Bombay Gazette, however, the whole issue remained a rather abstract one.[7] For some weeks from around 20 February onwards Press coverage of the Ilbert Bill remained extensive - readers' letters to the Englishman came in in shoals - supporting, and feeding upon, the creation of an institutional opposition which by the third week in February was well under way.

The first moves to organise institutions in opposition to the Bill were made as soon as the Bill was formally introduced on 9 February 1883. Next day, after discussions it would seem between the Calcutta lawyers and business heads in the Bengal Club

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1. Ripon to Kimberley 4.3.1883, Ind. [MPD] BP7/3, 64. See also Note 15.4.1883 of J. Gibbs, Home Dept. Member, in Ripon P. XCIII, 45, and C. Dobbin, 'The Ilbert Bill: A study of Anglo-Indian Opinion in India, 1883' in Historical Review, Australia and New Zealand, Oct. 1965, 91 note. James Wilson, the owner of the Indian Daily News, was to aid the opposition in Britain to the Bill from his home in Sheffield. See Allen's Indian Mail 15, 28.11.1883.

2. See issues 10.2.1883 and 1.3.1883.

3. Madras Mail 3.3.1883, and extract in Athenaeum 11.3.1883. The Mail was published by J.J. Craen and the Athenaeum by W. Assey.

4. Pioneer 8.2.1883, and 21.2.1883 (weekly edition). In the absence abroad of its editor A.P. Sinnett, H. Hensman the assistant editor acted as officiating editor during 1883.

5. Civil and Military Gazette 10, 16, 23, 28.2.1883. The paper's editor was S.E. Wheeler.

6. Gibbs Note 15.4.1883, 83.

7. Times of India 27.2.1883, and extracts from this and the Bombay Gazette in Madras Mail 3.3.1883. These two papers were edited respectively by H. Curwen and G. Geary.

and the leading agency houses,[1] the President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce Robert Miller, one of the two non-official Europeans on the Legislative Council, drew his Committee's attention to the proposed amendment in the law.[2] The Committee met on 14 February, judged the matter one 'of paramount importance to the commercial public generally', and accordingly lost no time in circulating members inviting their attendance to discuss the matter at a special general meeting on 21 February.[3] Up in Assam another committee had also met on the 14th, that of the Silchar branch of the ITA, the Indian Tea Association, which resolved to request the Calcutta committee of the Association to make representation to Government and prepare a protest memorial on the Bill.[4] The third move would have been taken on 22 February, when a great protest meeting at the Calcutta Town Hall was planned for the eve of the bringing a motion on the Bill in the Legislative Council. However Government got wind of this, entered into a flurry of correspondence with Griffith Evans[5] and secured its postponement by undertaking to defer the motion. There was much non-official grumbling at the community's Council members Evans and Miller for thus interfering, but as it happened the opposition to the Bill profited greatly by the delay, for by the time the Town Hall meeting was held on the 28th and the Bill introduced in Council on 9 March, public interest and activity had multiplied considerably.

The first major public Ilbert Bill protest meeting to be held in India[6] thus became that of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce

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1. The discussions had probably been going on since the Council meeting of 2 February.

2. Miller was Sheriff of Calcutta at the time and a partner in Hoare, Miller & Co., the large shipping house, see Thacker, Spink and Co., The Bengal Directory, 1883, 313. This directory (called The India Directory from 1885) will be referred to in short in this work in the style of Thacker's 1883 and similarly.

3. Bengal C/Comm Cttee progs. 14.2.1883, X, 139, 140.

4. Telegram from C.J. Bell the ITA Secretary in Silchar, in Englishman 5.3.1883. The telegram (as reports in this paper of 26.2.1883 and 2.5.1883 indicate) appears to have erred in giving the meeting's date as 13 February.

5. Ilbert-Ripon-Evans correspondence 16.2.-20.2.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/6, 55-8, 112-129.

6. There would be around 180 protest meetings against the Bill in India before the opposition campaign was wound up.

in Calcutta on 21 February. This general meeting expressed unqualified disapproval of the Ilbert Bill, called for the utmost opposition to the measure, appointed a sub-committee to draw up and procure signatures for a protest memorial and instructed the Chamber to confer with its Bombay and Madras counterparts to take united action against the Bill.[1] The Madras Chamber was quick to respond to the Bengal Chamber's telegram for the Europeans in Madras had already been preparing to protest against the Bill, and a Chamber meeting there on 23 February demanded the concerted opposition of the European community throughout British India against the Bill.[2] The subsequent more temperately voiced protest of the Bombay Chamber followed a fortnight later, on 6 March.

In the week following the Bengal Chamber's meeting in Calcutta other, well publicised support from many points was offered to the campaign. Despite the delays in organising meetings imposed by the wide scatter of tea planters in Assam[3] a first protest meeting was held at Dibrugarh on 21 February. On the 23rd the Madras meeting took place, and news came in of opposition to the Bill in Muzaffarpur, Lahore and Meerut. With the announcement of a Calcutta Trades' Association meeting for 1 March, with widespread calls being made for the European Volunteers to lay down their arms and then the notice that the postponed Town Hall meeting would be held on the 28th[4] excitement mounted rapidly in Calcutta. News continued to pour in from the mofussil of protests and alarm at the threat posed by the Bill - by the month's end it was known that the non-official communities of Darjeeling, Mussoorie, Tindharia, Sukna and Punkabari and of Ranchi, Silchar

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1. For proceedings see Bengal C/Comm Report half-year ended 30.4.1883, 6-21. The meeting achieved wide publicity in the Calcutta papers the next day. Despite its obvious and open antagonism against the Bill, the Chamber's formal protest thereon to Government had still to pass the approval of its Special Memorial Committee, and when the Secretary, keen to get the memorial to Government as soon as possible, had sent it in without obtaining this prior approval, he was reprimanded therefor. See Bengal C/Comm Cttee progs. 30.4.1883, 154.

2. Madras C/Comm Report 1883, appendix 2-10, gives account and proceedings.

3. Already by around 20 February the Secretary of the Indian Tea Association in Calcutta had telegraphed ITA officials in the mofussil drawing the dangerous Bill to their notice and urging them to protest.

4. See Englishman 20-24.2.1883.

and Dimapur had all thrown their weight behind Calcutta in denouncing the measure, whilst news would shortly follow of protest meetings held at Garidura, Ranicherra, Chota Nagpur, Kurseong, Sirajganj, Jalpaiguri and Raniganj.[1] Of the three European community newspapers in Calcutta only the Statesman continued to take a conciliatory line,[2] the Englishman and the Indian Daily News doing their best to drum up opposition enthusiasm. Readers' letters against the Bill, principally to the Englishman, were still growing in number,[3] and on 28 February appeared the first of the ninety letters by 'Britannicus' which were to make him a hero of the campaign in India.[4]

The Calcutta Town Hall meeting on 28 February which took place in an atmosphere of intense excitement[5] not only marked the climax of the anti Ilbert Bill agitation in India for the month, but was to prove the most important meeting of the whole campaign, leading directly to the formation of the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association. Between three and four thousand persons were present[6] and the platform party and the leading speakers represented a complete cross-section of interest of the community and its allies. The chair was taken by Miller, the Sheriff. J.J.J. Keswick, senior partner of the Jardine, Skinner agency house, President of the Bengal Club, Chairman of the Indian Tea Association, successor designate to Miller as Chamber of Commerce President and looked up to as 'King' of Calcutta's

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1. See Englishman 27.2.1883 - 3.3.1883.

2. See Statesman 27.2.1883.

3. Around eighty such letters were to appear in this paper by 9 March.

4. Correspondents, both non-official and official, overwhelmingly addressed letters to the papers under pseudonyms. Despite the great attention his numerous letters received, the identity of 'Britannicus' was never disclosed publicly during the days of this controversy and was in fact only to be revealed to the world at large upon his death in 1889, as detailed in chapter III below.

5. Nearly 200 commercial and trade establishments advertised early closing (see Englishman 28.2.1883) to enable their staffs to get to the meeting. Sir Mortimer Durand, the Viceroy's acting Private Secretary at the time, mentions that the shouts of applause and wrath at the meeting could be heard in Government House. See Life of the Right Hon. Sir Alfred Comyn Lyall, 280.

6. Athenaeum 2.3.1883, Statesman 6.3.1883.

non-official British,[1] was accorded the honour of moving the first resolution. Other speakers included H. Pratt the Master of the Calcutta Trades' Association, and J. Murdoch of William Moran and D. Cruickshank of Begg, Dunlop, (both agency houses with large tea and indigo interests in the mofussil). The advocates J.H.A. Branson and J. Pitt-Kennedy made prominent speeches and the supporting speech of their fellow advocate J.G. Apcar not only further demonstrated the strength of the legal interest in the opposition movement, but more particularly emphasised the alliance with the non-official British of the Armenian community in whose leadership Apcar's family was distinguished. In addition, the opportunity to speak that was given both to the Rev W.H. Finter, the rector of St. James's School and President of the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association, and to W. Bleeck (partner in the agency house Ernsthausen and Oesterley) the German consul, identified the Eurasians and domiciled British and the non-British Europeans (Germans, Greeks and Frenchmen were all present) with the movement.[2] The like support to the cause of Calcutta's Jewish community was recognised by the appointment of its leaders E.D.J. Ezra and E.S. Gubboy to a committee set up by the meeting.[3] The presence of women at the Town Hall assembly identified the memsahibs with the men of the non-official community, and very significantly so did the presence of a large number of covenanted civil servants and army officers, of uncovenanted civil servants and of at least one High Court Judge (John F. Norris).[4]

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1. Thacker's 1883, 293, 314, Indian Tea Association Report (for short ITA Report) 1883, 15, Bengal C/Comm Cttee progs. 23.5.1883, 162 and H.R. Pankridge, A Short History of the Bengal Club, 39.

2. Bengalee 10.3.1883, Thacker's 1883, 306-17. Finter's Association had offered support on 27 February and advertised inviting Eurasians and domicileds to attend the meeting. See Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association Report, (hereafter EurAIA Report), [1883-84], 11, 12, and Englishman 28.2.1883.

3. Ezra and Gubboy (or Gubbay) were prominent businessmen and property owners, the former being the landlord of the Bengal Club, and were respectively President and joint Vice President of the Calcutta branch of the Anglo-Jewish Association. See E.N. Musleah, On the Banks of the Ganga - The Sojourn of Jews in Calcutta, ch. 8, and Bengal Club Report and Accounts 1883, 6.

4. D. Argov, Moderates and Extremists in the Indian National Movement 1883-1920, 10.

At the meeting hitherto latent sentiments now came into the open. 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?' conjectured Keswick, querying the advisability of giving extended powers to native judges, and his doubting drew applause. The violent, racially abusive speech of the lawyer Branson, a member of the domiciled community, was greeted if anything by even more applause from the audience present. 'What the stiletto is to the Italian, a false charge is to the Bengalee', he said. 'Do not forget that there are wily natives, snakelike, who creep in where you cannot walk, because you cannot walk unless you walk upright'. Was it that justice might be impartially administered, he queried, 'that the greasy Baboo is to sit upon you in judgment?'.[1] Branson was quick to apologise for the record,[2] but the speech was remembered and his repentance forgotten.

The Town Hall meeting passed three important resolutions. The first (in the nature of a general all-India protest) attacked the Ilbert Bill as unnecessary, uncalled for, unsound and resulting from inexperience, and stressed that whilst it conferred no benefit on or additional protection to natives, it forfeited cherished time-honoured privileges and imperilled the liberties of European British subjects. It added that the sense of insecurity it must arouse in Europeans and their wives and daughters in the mofussil would necessarily curb the investment of British capital in India, and emphasised that the Bill stirred up race feelings not aroused since the Mutiny. The second resolution related to the drawing up and circulation for signature of protest memorials against the Bill which were to be forwarded to the Indian Government, the Secretary of State and both Houses of Parliament. The third and last resolution set up a Committee to carry out the objects of the second resolution. The Committee was to consist of 'Messrs Keswick, Flemington, W.L. Thomas, A.B. Miller, G.H.P. Evans, J.H.A. Branson, Ezra, Gubboy, Finter,

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1. See meeting report in Englishman supplement 1.3.1883, and Bengalee 3.3.1883. Baboo: disparaging term for a superficially westernized Indian.

2. Indian Daily News, 3.3.1883: 'That I should have been led by any excitement to use such language has pained me very much'.

Madge, Murdoch and Cruickshank, with power to add to their number....'.[1]

The excitement in Calcutta continued in the first days of March and the opposition to the Bill stiffened daily as reports of yet further protests against the measure flooded into the city. News of opposition meetings held elsewhere in India, (the Englishman gave news of twenty four such meetings in its issues of 1-8 March), of major protest memorials in preparation,[2] and of other remonstrances, was quite the rage. Visitors to the capital and private correspondence from out of town added in turn to the news that was circulating of the protest campaign. In this period the Calcutta Trades' Association duly added its public protest on 1 March[3] whilst on the 7th, in what he hinted was almost a superfluous gesture, the Indian Tea Association's Chairman recorded the ITA's protest, at the annual general meeting of that body.[4] By the eve of the Legislative Council meeting at which the Ilbert Bill was to be discussed there was more than enough ammunition for the non-official British members of Council, Evans and Miller, to use in attack. So much so that Evans, who made the strongest attacking speech at the meeting, kept up his bombardment for a full two and a half hours.[5]

By 8 March there had been public reports of some 66 protest meetings or area remonstrances,[6] 39 of them before the end of

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1. Englishman supplement 1.3.1883. J. Flemington was a partner in Gisborne & Co. a large insurance agency house, Thomas a partner in J. Thomas & Co. the indigo, tea, silk and general produce brokers and Miller a barrister at law, see Thacker's 1883, 312, 321, 1044, 1128, 1204. W.C. Madge was Secretary of the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association in Calcutta.

2. Namely those initiated by the Town Hall meeting, the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Chambers, Anglo-Indians and European British in Allahabad, and railway employees in Jamalpur, see Englishman 1-8.3.1883.

3. Englishman supplement 2.3.1883, and CTA Report 1883, 3, 18, 19. The Trades' Associations of Madras and Bombay were to follow in protest later though without any similar special meeting, see P.P. 1884, LX, 136-7, 594-5.

4. Englishman supplement 8.3.1883, ITA Report 1883, 1, 2.

5. For proceedings of this lengthy Council meeting see Englishman supplements 10, 12.3.1883 and Leg. Cl. progs. 1883, XXII, 131-236.

6. There were around 50 meetings, the balance representing area remonstrances cabled in.

February. In this first round Calcutta's share had been only two meetings, but those of major importance, being that of the Bengal Chamber on the 21st, in the nature of a campaign opener, and that at the Town Hall on the 28th. The stiff language used at both demonstrated the sophisticated self-confidence that the Calcutta community leadership felt. Of the February meetings and remonstrances outside Calcutta, Assam produced 15, Bengal 18,[1] the North-Western Provinces 2 and Madras and the Punjab one each. The geographical pattern suggests how strong the influence of Calcutta was in the whole movement, and this is re-inforced when it is realised that after the first early spontaneous protest meeting at Silchar on 14 February all the remaining meetings or telegraphed remonstrances in Assam were triggered off by an appeal from the Indian Tea Association in Calcutta to its branch secretaries and those of the local planting associations in general for supporting expressions of protest. The appeal probably went out on 20 February[2] and all but two of the response protests had been recorded by the 24th, and in similar language. The difficulties inherent in calling together at short notice a meeting of persons scattered over wide areas - as here with the tea planters in Assam, meant that in many instances a protest telegram had to suffice for Calcutta's use in this early campaign period. A few protest meetings in Assam were convened, however, those at Dibrugarh and Silchar on 21 and 24 February respectively being the most important, with around thirty persons present at each.[3] The Assam protests made at the ITA's request were primarily those of tea planters but, as elsewhere in the mofussil, members of the general European community were present at such meetings. Because of the lack of knowledge about the Bill or of other protests at this early stage the protests made in Assam in this period were

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1. The expression Bengal used here relates to the then Lieutenant-Governorship, and thus includes Behar.

2. 'Read the telegram from the Secretary of the Indian Tea Association on receipt of which the meeting was called', remark of the Chairman of the Dibrugarh protest meeting on 21 February given in Englishman 5.3.1883. The Cachar report in ibid. 5.3.1883 and remarks of the Chairman at an April protest meeting in Silchar given in ibid. 2.5.1883 add further corroborating evidence of the wire pulling in Assam that the ITA in Calcutta was doing behind the scenes.

3. The Dibrugarh meeting had nearly fifty proxies in addition.

notably general in form and couched in moderate and respectful language.

The readiness of Assam's Europeans to accede to Calcutta's appeal was due to a combination of genuine feelings of insecurity about their legal position[1] coupled with annoyance at Government's recent policies affecting the area. Planters were irritated at the way Government was enticing tea garden coolies away for work on roads and bridges in the Province by the offer of higher wages, and again at the restrictions that were placed in the way of their importing needed garden labour from Madras. If this was not enough Government was currently introducing an unwanted Inland Emigration Act, Act I of 1882, under which planters would be burdened with heavy paperwork and their gardens made subject to stricter government inspection, and was also contemplating the repeal as regards Assam of the labour contract law, Act XIII of 1859, which had hitherto served their purposes very satisfactorily. Planters were also being asked to find the time to serve on the Local Committees being set up under the Viceroy's new scheme of Local Self Government,[2] and to do so - the final irritation - when officialdom was making quite unjustified moral complaints about them![3]

By contrast with Assam, in Bengal group protests in this period seemed largely a response to the example of the Bengal Chamber's meeting on 21 February. This held true not only for the nine tea planter meetings held in the Darjeeling-Terai-Duars region, at which of course some non-planter Europeans were present,[4] but also, to some extent, for the five general meetings

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1. In Assam at the time there were only around 800 British (700 males, 100 females), and that including officials. Statistics of the British-born Subjects ... Census of India ... 1881., Form X.

2. Ripon's extended scheme of Local Self-Government was introduced in May 1882. For discussion on the issue see L.P. Mathur, Lord Ripon's Administration in India (1880-84 A.D.) ch. XV and Gopal, ch. VIII. H. Tinker, The Foundations of Local Self-Government in India, Pakistan and Burma provides a general study of Local Self-Government development in India.

3. These current Assam planter grievances are discussed further in chapter IV below.

4. Seven of these meetings were held between 24 and 26 February.

held in the Dacca, Chota Nagpur and Patna Divisions.[1] The third group of Bengal protesters, however, that of the Behar indigo planters, who had held no meeting in February, had set about preparing a strong remonstrance against the Bill directed through their own association. One other feature which served to distinguish Bengal's protests from those of Assam was the greater prominence given to the European Volunteer theme.[2] The Bengal meetings did stress, like those of Assam, the special conditions of the mofussil and the plight of the isolated European there if the Bill should come into force, but greater numbers and proximity to Calcutta meant that feelings of insecurity were less manifest. Better acquaintance through the Press with the way the campaign was growing also encouraged a bolder, more confident tone, and collections were readily made for a campaign fund for organised protests to Government. Self-assurance born of easier contact with Calcutta and the larger numbers who attended their meetings[3] ensured that the Bengal community's opposition to the Bill down to the end of February was progressively sharper than that of Assam.

The one Madras meeting, that of the Chamber there on 23 February, had been prompted into being by the Bengal Chamber. The speakers at the meeting, which was presided over by the Chamber's Chairman, J.C. Shaw of Parry and Co., included representatives of commerce, trades and the law.[4] They protested against the Bill as threatening loss of cherished right and stressed the

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1. See for example notice and reports of Darjeeling and Sirajganj meetings in Englishman 26.2.1883, ibid. and supplement 27.2.1883 and ibid. 5.3.1883.

2. The European Volunteers were threatening to resign if Ripon did not withdraw the Bill.

3. The Bengal meetings were generally noted as being well or largely attended or crowded and with the whole of the local non-official European community seen in attendance on occasion.

4. Among those who spoke were A. Mackenzie of Arbuthnot & Co., C.A. Ainsley of Binny & Co., R.G. Orr, Chairman of the Madras Trade Association, the lawyer R. Branson and M. Gould the Administrator-General who was a Vice President of the Bank of Madras.

danger to European capital investment,[1] and the meeting resolved upon a protest memorial to Parliament in conjunction with planters and other Europeans in the South Indian mofussil.[2] But having made its gesture in the opposition campaign, and with a good cross section of interests represented, the European community of Madras (the third largest city in India after Calcutta and Bombay) felt that it had done its bit and rested content. Though they had paid lip service to European planters in the South the citizens of Madras did no more, for in the South there were no such close ties between planters and agency houses as there were in the North; indeed planters there took pride in their rugged individualism and in remaining quite independent.[3] Madras in short was far less involved with the issue than was its compatriot community in Calcutta. No protest meetings were held anywhere else in India during February, though there were reports from the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab of anger being rife in Mussoorie, Meerut and Lahore.

A second round of opposition meetings against the Ilbert Bill took place between 1-8 March, some twenty seven in all.[4] Of these 3 were in Calcutta (those of the CTA and ITA and of railway employees at Sealdah),[5] 14 in other parts of Bengal, 6 in Assam, and one each in Bombay, the North-Western and Central Provinces and the Punjab. In Calcutta the protest of the specially convened Trades' Association meeting of 1 March, whose large attendance reflected the excitement generated by the Town Hall meeting of the day before, expressed alarm, disapproval and repugnance to the Bill in emphatic terms.[6] It was thus much more dramatic than the passing protest expressed at the Tea Association

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1. In the London Stock Market there was already, for example, a lack of interest in South Indian gold mining shares. (See Englishman 19.3.1883). If the Bill were passed the market would be further discouraged. Mining as well as planting interests were thus represented at South Indian protest meetings held later, in March.
2. Englishman, 24.2.1883.
3. P. Griffiths, The History of the Indian Tea Industry, 169, S.G. Speer ed., UPASI 1893-1953, 1, 87.
4. Englishman and Pioneer 2-12.3.1883 provide the best overall coverage of the meetings.
5. The last named meeting (recorded in J. & P. 1049/1883) is discussed further below.
6. As with other meetings copies of protest resolutions were directed to be forwarded to Government.

general meeting a few days later. The ITA however had made its strong contribution to the campaign some two weeks previously by activating its branches and planting associations in the North East. The six Assam meetings held in this week immediately prior to the 9 March Council meeting, (one special Volunteers' protest meeting apart), represented follow-ups to former protests made by telegraph or by hastily called emergency meetings. Echoing sentiments voiced at the February meetings, but in slightly more confident tones, these latest meetings of planters and other Europeans in Assam threatened non-co-operation with the Volunteer movement and with Local Self-Government also.[1] Whilst some of these meetings against the Bill fell naturally under the ITA wing, that of the non-official European residents of North Sylhet, held on 3 March, was tied in more closely with the protest of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, (seemingly to emphasise that representation at the meeting was more widespread than that at a specifically tea interest meeting held there later the same day).

The fourteen Bengal meetings in this period represented general, railway and indigo interests respectively. The three general community meetings held at Chittagong, Narayanganj and Murshidabad all reflected the mofussil's close links with Calcutta both in the strength of language used and in their frequent references to the Town Hall meeting. Two of the three meetings proposed moreover to be guided by and to act in concert with the Calcutta Committee set up at that meeting.

The four railwaymen's meetings held at Asansol, Khagaul, Jamalpur and Sealdah in the first days of March brought the opposition of this group fully into the open, though there had been news of protest movements by the end of February. At Asansol mining as well as railway representatives took a prominent part in the proceedings,[2] whereas at Khagaul and Jamalpur the participants at the Railway Institute meetings were employees of the

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1. A special protest meeting against the new Act I of 1882 had been held in North Sylhet on 3 March shortly after the Ilbert Bill and Volunteer meetings there that day, and anti-Government irritation was thus made evident in Assam over a broad field.

2. The Asansol area protest on 1 March appears to have been split into a number of small, neighbourhood-group protests. The number of these however is unknown and for convenience the Asansol public protest here has been regarded as that of one collective meeting.

East India Railway and at Sealdah those of the Eastern Bengal Railway, though the protest memorials in all three cases followed the lines of that prepared at Jamalpur. These memorials[1] made clear the special worries railwaymen felt about the Ilbert Bill: the fear caused by their being isolated at stations remote from European centres and courts of higher jurisdiction and the further fear that native judges would be unable to comprehend (as their European counterparts did) the technical and scientific evidence which formed part of criminal cases relating to railway work, and that this would thus cause unnecessarily protracted and expensive trials as well as involving the real possibility of an erring and ruinous judgment at the end.

The remaining seven Bengal meetings were those of the indigo interest and all took place on the same day, 5 March, in Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Motihari and elsewhere in Behar. In the 1870's there had been renewed trouble in the indigo planting world in Behar which had led to an enquiry by the Bengal Government. The outcome was an agreement with Ashley Eden, the Lieutenant-Governor at the time, by which the planters were to set up an organisation of their own which would be responsible for exercising better control over planters' relations with their ryots. When this (Behar) Indigo Planters' Association was accordingly set up in 1877 it was on the understanding that Government would thenceforth leave the planters to regulate the industry themselves.[2] The possibility of a renewed interference in their affairs only a few years after the 1877 arrangement, was therefore particularly resented. The Behar indigo planters shared with the railwaymen the fear of isolation, intensified in their case by the uneasy nature of their domination of their ryots. The other worry was that of land litigation suits which might be stated against them, since it was most unlikely in their opinion that a native judge would take their side. It seems that Calcutta

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1. That of the employees of the East India Railway Company had 1,500 signatures of 'European' railway servants by 10 March, and the Sealdah memorial, 200. It seems likely that many of the domiciled and Eurasian community were among the signatories.

2. The matter is referred to in more detail in chapter IV.

business houses encouraged the planters to react against the Ilbert Bill,[1] but they needed no prompting. If the Behar indigo planters had had their way their public protest would have been voiced well before 5 March - in fact up in the vanguard with Assam - for already by 22 February their Planters' Association, it was reported, was addressing a strong remonstrance to Sir Steuart Bayley.[2] But W.B. Hudson the Association Secretary had felt that an airing by Bayley in the Legislative Council of planter opposition to the Bill was quite sufficient, and had so written to Bayley by the end of February.[3] Pressure of opinion among the hundreds of Europeans in North Behar, the planting stronghold, however, forced Hudson to yield to the general desire and to convene the round of planters' meetings which took place on 5 March.[4] At these meetings (where the Town Hall meeting's proceedings were obviously well known) opposition to the Bill was expressed in stiff and vehement language.[5] The Behar planters were to remain the group of Europeans most vehemently opposed to the Bill throughout the whole controversy with the Government.

Of the other four public protest meetings held before the Legislative Council meeting, that held at the important railway centre of Jubbulpore in the Central Provinces on 5 March[6] provided a further strengthening of the anti-Bill agitation of the railwaymen. The more widely noted Bombay Chamber of Commerce meeting resulted from prompting by the Bengal Chamber. The slower manner of its calling as compared with Madras's quick response,

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1. The Gibbs Note of 15.4.1883 mentions that 'Letters were sent through the country to the Planters and Settlers who as a class might be supposed to have some cause to object to the measure'.

2. Englishman 24.2.1883. Sir Steuart Colvin Bayley then a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, had been Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal from July to December 1879 and was familiar with Behar affairs.

3. See Hudson's letter to Bayley dated 8 February in Pioneer 28.2.1883. The date of the letter given is apparently a misprint, and should more probably read 18 rather than 28 February.

4. Europeans other than planters were of course present at the meetings, but they looked to the Planters' Association to take the lead against the Bill on their behalf.

5. Hudson, still lagging behind planting sentiment, had proposed a 'humble but firm' protest to the Muzaffarpur meeting. The meeting however made him substitute the word 'indignant' in this context and the word 'rights' in place of his weaker choice, 'privilege'.

6. Reported in Pioneer 12.3.1883.

implied that the leadership of Bombay's European business community was little touched by the fierce emotions that stirred Calcutta and the planting communities in North India. This was made evident, too, as the Indian newspapers noted, by the 'admirable moderation and decorum', with which the Bombay meeting was conducted[1] and the lack of any further protest meeting in that city throughout the campaign - a striking contrast with Calcutta.[2] The meeting held at the Mayo Hall, Allahabad in the North-Western Provinces on the same day as that in Bombay was attended by between two and three hundred persons and was more indignant in tone. Allahabad's meeting came a little belatedly,[3] the outcome of the initiative of a committee 'acting in consonance with the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce' - but it was among the largest,[4] if not indeed the largest, after the Town Hall meeting of all the meetings held up to that point. The meeting was of the general European and Anglo-Indian community with lawyers, railwaymen and traders prominent thereat, (the absence of officials was the subject of comment), and whilst it identified with opposition elsewhere, sharing the common stock of epthets about the Bill - 'unnecessary', 'uncalled for', 'dangerous to capital' and so on - memories of the Mutiny probably accounted for its particularly enthusiastic and excited attendance, for its decision to set up a committee to organise a determined local opposition, and for the stress in the important memorial endorsed by the meeting upon the anarchy and disorder which would be let loose were the Bill to become law. The Allahabad community's opposition was however, self-centred. Objecting to the Bill as far as the NWP was concerned because it would upset the currently good race

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1. C.H. Philips et al., The Evolution of India and Pakistan 1858 to 1947 Select Documents, 143. About forty members as well as some non-members were present at the meeting presided over by James Thoburn, of Sir Charles Forbes & Co., the Chamber's Chairman. M. Mowat of Ritchie, Steuart and W.M. Macaulay (a Bombay Legislative Councillor) of Ewart, Latham, were the two principal speakers.

2. Bombay's self-reliant independence from Calcutta, its better race relationships and its smaller (and non-planting) European mofussil population as compared with its rival, account for its aloofness in the anti-Bill campaign.

3. Partly because of physical distance from Calcutta, partly because Allahabad was not subject to the hegemony of the Calcutta managing agencies.

4. This despite the fact that the meeting was a preliminary one, called at one day's notice only.

relations in the Province, Allahabad expressed itself unconcerned about the effect of the Bill upon Europeans in Bengal and elsewhere who, in its opinion, could look after themselves![1] In the Punjab, further yet from Calcutta, ripples of opposition had reached Lahore in February, but the comparative scarcity of European non-officials had delayed the convening of even a preliminary protest meeting until 7 March. Some 200 persons, however, representing all classes of the European community, attended the meeting there that day at the Lawrence Hall, and appointed a committee to decide on further steps to make their opposition known.[2]

The volume and vehemence of the opposition to the Ilbert Bill which had been stirred into motion in the bare five weeks between the Legislative Councils of 2 February and 9 March, caused Ripon to waver. At the start, though the vocal opposition of Evans in Council had indicated that there might be some European outcry to come, Ripon had not been over-worried and he had felt sure the Bill would pass.[3] A week later on 10 February, when reports of reactions in Britain were stirring up the initial opposition in India the Viceroy was watchful but still confident. His confidence was largely due to the fact that 'the European press is by no means generally against us' and in particular that two of the three European papers in Calcutta were then supporting the Bill.[4] By the 17th however he was voicing his fear that the expected outcry might be turning into a storm blown up by the European Press campaign against the Bill,[5] and the about-turn of the Indian Daily News two days later, demonstratively asserted from the 21st,[6]

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1. See Pioneer 8.3.1883. The meeting was chaired by the barrister W.S. Howell while the solicitor R.C. Saunders and the railwaymen's leader F.T. Atkins were the two principal speakers. It seems fairly probable that Europeans from nearby Cawnpore, who had Mutiny memories of their own to recall, were also present at the meeting and were among the signatories to its memorial. Were this not so it would seem difficult to account for the fact that the Cawnpore memorial, which had an identical text to that from Allahabad, was only signed by nine persons, see Englishman 8.3.1883.

2. Englishman 24.2.1883, 8.3.1883, Pioneer 12.3.1883. On the committee along with a lawyer, a railwayman, bankers and traders, were D.P. Masson and S.E. Wheeler the proprietor and editor of the Civil and Military Gazette.

3. Ripon to Kimberley 3.2.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 40.

4. Ripon to Kimberley 10.2.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 52.

5. Ripon to Kimberley 17.2.1883, ibid., 60.

6. Gibbs Note 15.4.1883, 83.

added to his worries at a time when he was desperately trying to stave off the Town Hall meeting called for the 22nd. By 26 February, the disheartened and disappointed Viceroy, taken aback by the vehement opposition to the Bill, was 'not sure that I should have moved in the matter just now': had he foreseen events he might have hesitated to bring the question forward when he had 'other reforms in hand of much greater importance than this'.[1] (The Viceroy here overlooked his letter of 8 September 1882 to Hartington in which he had then regarded the subject as important, for whilst it was no doubt a small measure in itself, it embraced an important principle: whether India was ultimately to be governed for the British or the Indians).[2] A week later with the Town Hall meeting past and opposition still swelling considerably, Ripon freely admitted that Government had made a mistake in introducing the Bill and could not be held blameless. He himself was at fault since in his years as Viceroy[3] he had failed to ascertain 'the true feelings of the average Anglo-Indian towards the natives',[4] though in mitigation he emphasised that the Local Governments, his Executive Council and the Council of

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1. Ripon to Kimberley 26.2.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 63 and to Halifax 26.2.1883, ibid., BP7/5, 29, 30. Ripon to Northbrook 20.2.1883 ibid. BP7/5, 27 and to Gladstone 24.3.1883, Gladstone P. CCII, Add. MSS. 44287, 3, express similar sentiments. The great reforms in mind were those of land revenue and tenure and education. See also Ripon to Thomas Hughes (a long-standing Christian Socialist friend) 8.12.1882, Ind.[MPD] BP7/5, 170. The Viceroy's current view that the measure was of minor importance was based on there being at the time only a handful of Covenanted Indians, (nine in all as J.& P.617/1883 recorded), of whom, as he furthermore emphasised in a 9 April 1883 letter to the Under Secretary of State, Cross, (Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 103), only two, Satyendranath Tagore of Bombay and Romesh Chunder Dutt of Bengal would immediately obtain the proposed new powers and only Behari Lal Gupta and six other Indians within the next ten years ex officio, though a few Indians might possibly be accorded such jurisdiction under the Local Government discretion given in the Bill. See also Leg. Cl. progs. 9.3.1883, XXII, 216 and Gopal, 135.

2. See Ripon to Gladstone 24.3.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/5, 50, and speech of the Liberal Member of Parliament John Bright at Glasgow 22.3.1883 reported in Times 23.3.1883.

3. Ripon had assumed the Viceroyalty in June 1880.

4. Ripon appears to have forgotten his comment in Legislative Council on 2 February 1882 that 'we all know the agitation that has taken place and the strong excitement which has arisen in past times' on such questions.

India in Britain had been no more forsighted either.[1]

On 6 March when the great storm which had emerged out of an apparently clear sky was at its blackest in Calcutta, Ripon showed himself particularly concerned about reactions to the Bill in Britain and the belief of opponents of the Bill in India that the support they were receiving from the Times meant that English public opinion was on their side. He appealed to his friend Thomas Hughes for help in the matter.[2] In the next few days an apparent incitement of the Army to join in the campaign was to give the Viceroy a further headache,[3] and the opposition to the Bill of Rivers Thompson the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in the Council discussion of 9 March was yet another blow. At this Council meeting, Ripon managed to save face by asserting - using the conciliatory language Kimberley had advised - that Government would be proceeding with the Bill and sending it for Local Government opinion in the usual manner,[4] but that naturally any arguments against the measure fairly put to Government by non-officials in the meanwhile would be accorded due weight and consideration. Ripon had preserved Government dignity so far, but the swell of opposition which by 9 March had already caused two of his Executive Council, Theodore Hope and Sir Steuart Bayley, the Public Works and Agricultural Members, to urge the immediate withdrawal of the Bill[5] - had had its influence upon Ripon and had made him receptive to the idea of introducing concessionary

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1. Ripon to Kimberley 4.3.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 66-9. Though Maine, in the Council of India, had suggested sounding out the non-officials on the proposed change, Hartington had not passed on his warning. For details here see L. Wolf, Life of the First Marquess of Ripon, II, 137-40 and Gopal, 131-2. Ripon, however, as his letter of 4 March shows, would have been very reluctant to believe the widespread existence of Black Act sentiments so removed from his own feelings.

2. Ripon to Hughes 6.3.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/5, 44-5, and Wolf, I, 23-7. Hughes, who had been a Member of Parliament and was a County Court Judge, could hopefully exploit his important connections.

3. The matter is discussed below.

4. At the meeting - for which Ripon had been trying behind the scenes to drum up Members' support - six of the nineteen present opposed proceeding with the Bill. In addition to Evans and Miller they were Rivers Thompson, Wilson the Military Member, Thomas the Madras official and Raja Siva Prasad.

5. Secret telegram to London in J. & P. 519/1883.

changes in the Bill. It was probably with much relief that Ripon left Calcutta a few days later en route for the quieter atmosphere of Simla. Having had his Good Friday in Calcutta as one Lieutenant-Governor noted, he was 'now to rise again, if he can', on the hill.[1] Amidst all the violent agitation against the measure Ripon drew what comfort he could from the moderateness of Bombay and from the pleased welcome that the Natives gave to the Bill.[2]

If the reports of the numerous meetings attacking the Ilbert Bill and the general opposition of the European Press had caused Government by 9 March to take alarm, the news brought to the non-official community feelings of righteous satisfaction, pleasure and indeed excitement at the manifest strength of support for their cause. The many protest letters in the papers in turn increased the euphoria and added both to the passion and confidence of the movement. Such letters, like the meetings, reflected the way in which the campaign front was building up. Thus while only 20 of the 76 letters about the Bill published in the Englishman's correspondence columns down to 8 March had appeared before 26 February,[3] in the next two days no less than 14 further letters were published and an additional 42 in the eight March days immediately prior to the Council meeting.[4] Their content as well as their numerical progression was similarly indicative. The

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1. Sir Alfred Lyall to his sister Mrs B. Webb 13.3.1883, Lyall C. MSS.Eur.F. 132/9,-.

2. Six native organisations (the British Indian Association, the Indian Association, the Mahomedan Literary Society, the National Mahommedan Association, the East Bengal Association and the Vakil's Association) had submitted a joint memorial, dated 8 March, in favour of the Bill. See P.P. 1884, LX, 553-4. On 13 March Madras was reporting that a memorial from Tamils similarly supporting Government had obtained 10,000 signatures.

3. Of the 76 letters published only three were not anti-Bill. Of these that signed 'Civilian' was definitely from an official, and the pseudonyms of the other two may again have concealed officials. A further 114 letters about the Bill were published in the Englishman down to the end of March.

4. By contrast with the Englishman there were seventeen Ilbert Bill letters in the Indian Daily News from 1 to 8 March, seven of them however concentrated on Branson's Town Hall speech. As for the Pioneer this published only nine letters in this period about the Bill including one from Allan Hume suggesting that Native Volunteers could take over if European Volunteers resigned. The Hume letter sparked off a further flurry of objecting letters in its own right.

early letters down to 24 February contented themselves in the main with stressing why the Bill was unnecessary and uncalled for, discussing whether officials were for or against the measure, and calling for Volunteers to lay down their arms in protest. From 26 to 28 February the tone of the letters stiffened. The opposition had been too mild to date felt correspondents and actions rather than words were necessary. As the main attention came to focus on the impending Town Hall meeting writers urged the early closing of businesses to enable staff to attend. One wrote to make it clear that the presence thereat of non-British Europeans and Eurasians would be welcome.

In the first days of March, pervaded by excitement, two important new themes were raised by correspondents. The first was that of the Army, for the Bill had allowed the possibility of an Indian becoming a Cantonment Magistrate. Amongst the three letters on the subject one by an army officer declared the impossibility of controlling the men and preventing violence were one of their comrades to be sentenced by a native judge.[1] The second theme was that of the European woman's position under the Bill's provisions. Male letter-writers to the papers had touched previously upon the effect of the measure upon the gentler sex,[2] but on 4 March the matter was given quite new importance by a strong letter from Mrs Annette Beveridge, the wife of a Bengal official, published in the Englishman, it being the first time that a British woman had brought the subject into prominence. Mrs Beveridge declared - and she was soon to be followed by other women correspondents to the paper expressing the female standpoint - that she spoke the 'feeling of all Englishwomen in India' in holding it to be an insult to submit Englishwomen to the

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1. The news of the apparent Army opposition, quickly flashed to England, resulted in exchanges between Kimberley and Ripon and concluded with the view that the feared danger was non-existent, see J. & P. 519/1883. The cantonment section in the Bill was in due course to be discreetly dropped, and the role of the 60,000 strong British Army in India in the campaign remained a negligible one.

2. 'What would more please our fellow subjects than to bully and disgrace a wretched European woman?' wrote 'X' in the Englishman of 10 February.

jurisdiction of a race who were 'savages'.[1] Outstanding among the numerous letters to this paper that month was that of 'Britannicus' on 'India for the Indians' which appeared on 19 March and was soon republished in pamphlet form. The Government's policy of India for the Indians was an absurd and misleading cry he argued, for to his opinion there was no country called India, and no native styled Indian, but merely a conglomeration of petty states belonging to many different tribes and races. The only people who had any right to India, he stated, 'are the British'.

In the early March period the dominating theme of the correspondence columns was the need for action. Wide publicity for the proceedings of the Town Hall meeting was urged, offers of subscription to a campaign fund were made and suggestions for setting up a political association re-iterated. As 'A European British Subject' writing from the Bengal Club to the Englishman on 25 February had put it: '... concerted action must be taken by every European and Eurasian in India, to protect from absolute destruction his political status', and he went on to urge '... that an association be immediately formed for the protection of European British subjects in India'. 'Britannicus' and others had already advocated the establishment of a Defence Fund[2] and had stressed the need to drum up support at Home through contacts there. Out of such widely expressed wishes and needs the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association now emerged, its formation being announced in the papers of 9 March.[3] The Association was to be a permanent body to protect the individual and material rights of Europeans and Anglo-Indians and to stand vigilant guard both in India and in England over them. Subscriptions were welcomed and would be applied first towards the expense of the Ilbert Bill protest struggle.

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1. Her husband Henry Beveridge, on furlough from his post as judge at Bankipur, regretted her having written the letter and the matter was discussed in a series of letters between them. See letters 3-9.6.1883 in Annette and Henry Beveridge C. MSS.Eur.C. 176/15,-, and discussion on the correspondence in Lord Beveridge, India Called Them, 227-8, 248.

2. The Indian Association was later to take pains to point out that the idea of setting up a native National Fund in 1883 did not reflect thought-borrowing from the Europeans but rather the utilisation of the present outburst of public feeling to renew an old 1879 idea in a new garb. See Bengalee, 21.7.1883.

3. For notice in Englishman see Appendix I.

This new organisation, colloquially known as the Defence Association, had been 'called immediately into existence' by the introduction into the Legislative Council of the Ilbert Bill. 'But the causes which made such an Association necessary' as its first report explained, 'had their origin long anterior to the Ilbert Bill'. Such causes were 'connected with the false and mistaken policy of the Government as regards Europeans'. 'When the Ilbert Bill was brought into the Legislative Council', it was pointed out, 'it was made apparent to every thinking man that the Government had resolved upon a line of conduct which set at naught the circumstances surrounding the life of Englishmen in India'. If that conduct were not checked it 'would make that life intolerable, and would also make it well nigh impossible for a non-official European to exist in the Indian mofussil'. However, 'the case created by the Government' the first report continued, 'was not one to be met by the ordinary results of public meetings, nor ... one which could be satisfied by the accustomed action of existing public bodies'. 'It thus became necessary, for the first time in India, to form an Association having a distinctly political end in view'.[1]

The vast number of meetings held to oppose the Ilbert Bill in the first phase of the campaign, and which had now resulted - well before they had run their course - in the formation of the Defence Association,[2] reflected a non-official antagonism to Government which was widespread both geographically and in the number of sectors which now coalesced under the Association's banner. Some doubtless joined the campaign for the tamasha, the exciting show, and others because of community pressure upon them.

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1. EAIDA Report [1884], 1, 2.

2. Between the 9 March Council Meeting and the month end the meetings had increased to around ninety, and this apart from the area remonstrances reported. Amongst these forty further meetings was a Rangoon general community meeting on 10 March with between 800 and 1,000 present - notable for conflicting viewpoints of the European editors of the Rangoon Times and the Rangoon Gazette, (W.H. Wootton the editor of the first named attacking the Bill and D.M. Gray the second editor unpopularly trying to defend it) - a railwaymen's meeting in Allahabad the same day, protest meetings in South Indian planting areas in Madras and Coorg, similar meetings in North (as distinct from North East) India tea planting areas, a protest by the Karachi Chamber of Commerce on 14 March, and amongst many further meetings in Assam and Bengal a belated protest from the Dacca community on the 28th.

Others did so from genuine feelings of alarm or to protect or advance group and personal interests. But it was clear, too, as the Defence Association's first report bore witness, that the campaign had provided a release for a fairly general sense of disquiet and irritation with government policy, long accumulating, and brought to a head by Ripon's actions. The irritated feeling, as indeed was noted in hindsight, 'only wanted some spark to make it burst forth'.[1]

Among those anxious to pay off scores with Ripon were the British judges of the Calcutta High Court. They had been angered by Ripon's appointment of Romesh Chunder Mitter as Acting Chief Justice during the leave abroad of Sir Richard Garth in 1882,[2] and by the recent reduction of their salaries to the level of other High Court judges.[3] Unable to side officially with the opposition movement the judges used the actions of their wives and other oblique stratagems to demonstrate where their feelings lay. 'I wish he [Hartington] had left that [salary] matter alone' Ripon wrote despondently.[4]

British land owners in India and the indigo planters whose survival depended upon their ability to secure control over land were another group annoyed by the trend of recent legislation, in this case the Bengal Tenancy Bill, introduced on 2 March 1883,[5] while all European planters in northern India, as has been seen, were alarmed by the threat to their control of native labour. The domiciled Anglo-Indians and Eurasians - many of them railwaymen and Government servants - were worried by the recent Engineering

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1. See Gibbs Note 15.4.1883, 44-5.

2. Gopal 120-1, and Mathur, 216-17.

3. J.F. Norris, J.Q. Pigot and J. O'Kinealy had been the three judges directly affected by the reduction. See Norris to Ripon 26.2.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/6, 138-8b, and India Home Progs. Judicial, Aug. 1883, vol. 2046, 1445-8 and Jan. 1884, vol. 2265, 19-20.

4. Ripon to Kimberley 17.2.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 60.

5. A. Seal, The Emergence of Indian Nationalism, 167, and report in Times 31.12.1883 of protest meeting against this Bill held in Calcutta 29 December, showing European participation. Ripon in letters to Kimberley in late July and mid-September 1883 alluded to a rumour of a deal being done between the Anglo-Indians and the zamindars for mutual support to each other on the Ilbert Bill and the Bengal Tenancy Bill respectively. The proposed land measure, which included provisions for fixity of tenure, fair rents and compensation for disturbance and improvements, was considered to unnecessarily increase the rights of tenants at the expense of the landlords.

College resolutions which had reserved for Indians those guaranteed appointments in the Public Works Department which had been formerly open to them and their children upon meritorious completion of the courses at the Civil Engineering Colleges in India. Since seven of the first thirteen appointments affected - those for 1885 and '86 - were for graduates of the Thomason College at Roorkee, the resolutions were popularly known as the 'Roorkee Resolutions'. The restriction of Gilchrist Scholarships and education grants by Government in favour of Indians, the exclusion of non-Indians from nomination in India to the Statutory Civil Service and general preference for Natives in government departmental appointments, were further grievances of this class, as correspondence and articles in the Press revealed.[1] There was in fact quite widespread fear of encroachment by Indians upon fields of employment hitherto seen as Eurasian, Anglo-Indian and British preserves. The entry of the United Railway and Government Servants' Association into the cause, at their Allahabad protest meeting on 10 March, was in part occasioned by this fear,[2] which was shared also by the post and telegraph workers and other of the community's Uncovenanted Government servants, and by the European artisan class as a whole. Nor was resentment confined to these levels. The policy of opening the Covenanted Civil Service to Indians from the 1850's, however difficult the entry, may have been sullenly accepted since very few of them had managed to pass since the 1860's, but the Lytton Rules of 1879, which had set aside a proportion of covenanted appointments - up to twenty per cent of those made in Britain - to be filled eventually by Indians selected by Government in India, had caused much anger, since it 'threw open the door much more widely to [them and] it must surely have become plain to every one that the abolition of

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1. See letters in Englishman 16.4. and 18.4.1883, leader in ibid. 22.6.1883 relating to educational scholarships bequeathed by J.B. Gilchrist a Bengal Army Officer, article 'Anglo-Indian Disabilities' in Pioneer 8.3.1883, and Gopal, 117.

2. F.S. Stanton, Administration Report on the Railways of India for 1881-82, cix, cx, exampled job-competition worries for engine drivers and shunters, and Macgregor reported the founding by the railwaymen of a Mutual Protection Society in the Punjab in April 1883, see Times, 23.4.1883.

the existing restrictions was only a question of time'.[1] A great many 'old-fashioned Anglo-Indians' had been disgusted with Ripon's Local Self-Government scheme precisely because it brought the Native into Government, a bad precedent at any level.[2] And in the same way the repeal of the Vernacular Press Act in 1882, seen then as mistaken,[3] was now the more resented as Indians used the Press sharply to attack the European critics of the Ilbert Bill.

The immediate worries of the planting community, in the North, isolated and vulnerable, have already been explained, but it is interesting to note how as the campaign proceeded new groups joined in. The Bombay Chamber membership, initially so tardy in identifying with the anti-Bill campaign, saw fit nevertheless to express concern for the European employees up country in the cotton tracts,[4] whilst the scattered tea and coffee planters of the Shevaroy Hills, Coorg and other areas of southern India - fearful like their northern India planting compatriots of an extension of native criminal jurisdiction in the mofussil - were another late group to so identify. (The fact that their protest meetings only began from 9 March onwards, and then looked to the example set by the Chamber of Commerce in Madras, may be explained by their lack of a co-ordinating organisation such as the BIPA or ITA - their own association was only formed a decade later - to instigate a campaign). Moreover behind them - responsible for triggering off the ITA and Chamber protests[5] and instigating agitation in other sectors too - were such groups as the agency houses, brokers and representatives of shipping lines, and even lawyers, whose own interests were bound up, directly or indirectly, with tea, indigo, coffee, coal and silk. Importers and shippers too joined in, irritated by Government's efforts to buy more stores

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1. Ripon to Kimberley 4.3.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 70-1, and to Halifax 6.3.1883, ibid. BP7/5, 40.

2. Ripon to Hughes, 6.3.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/5, 44 (Anglo-Indians here refers to Britons in India), Mehrotra 341, and see Seal, 167.

3. Mathur, 78 notes Griffith Evans's reluctant acquiescence in the repeal under government pressure.

4. Englishman, 8.3.1883.

5. For the belated protest of the Rangoon Chamber on 8 June see P.P. 1884, LX, 679.

within India.[1] Mill and factory owners for their part had already been agitated by the Factories Act of 1881 which benefited it seemed workers' interests rather than those of employers. Tradesmen quite logically feared that any major repercussions on business were the Bill to pass would affect their interests too, whilst the European professionals, and European assistants and skilled staff in the European commercial and industrial establishments felt their identification with the agitation was prudently called for, too. The entrance of the large women's group - which was formally to take place by the end of March - provided an important moral backing and sense of emotional unity to the campaign as a whole.[2] Among personal grievances which had been festering when the Ilbert Bill came along were religious irritation at India's having in Ripon a Catholic Viceroy, political annoyance at there being a Liberal Government in England, and a concern lest the repeal of the Arms Act might go through, so allowing the Natives legally to hold weapons. Personal and sectional fears and grievances thus combined with the more general feeling - reported to Ripon by Gibbs, that Ripon had come out to India to '"put the native on the gadi" (throne)'.[3] Give in over the Ilbert Bill and all would be lost was the common belief. If the Bill was indeed the last straw of mounting irritation, 'the excuse for the present outbreak of feeling and not its main cause' as the Viceroy reported,[4] there was nevertheless a feeling that failure to make a successful stand against it would be fatal, the measure being no more than 'the thin end of the wedge'.[5]

To orchestrate and weave together all these strands of interest and emotion there was the European Press. Macgregor,

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1. Mehrotra, 341.

2. The women ranked at least on a par with the indigo planters in their vehement opposition to the Bill.

3. Gibbs to Ripon 23.3.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 94, enclosure. See also Durand to Ripon 24.3.1883, Durand C. MSS.Eur.D.727/2,-,: 'The idea [circulating] is that Govt. tends to favour natives unduly at the expense of Europeans and Eurasians'.

4. Ripon to Kimberley 18.3.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 84.

5. Editorial in Englishman 23.2.1883, and Ripon to Kimberley 17.2.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 60. Dobbin, 93, notes the fear that the Natives might regard the Ilbert Bill as the first instalment of a series of concessions.

through the Times and other echoing newspapers in Britain, had sounded the first warning notes, but the theme had soon been taken up by the European Press in India and developed and elaborated. The first violin - or drum or trumpet perhaps - was undoubtedly the Englishman, which excited the public with the volume and gusto of its playing. (It ran what was virtually a publicity campaign against the Bill and considerably increased its circulation in the process.)[1] The Indian Daily News made rather a late entry, but thereafter supplied a steady counterpoint to the Englishman's stronger lead. In the North and North-West the Pioneer and the Civil and Military Gazette conducted respectively by Hensman and Wheeler led the non-official chorus in the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab, the Pioneer having the dominant role. (The Pioneer's voice was necessarily less resonant of course than that of the Englishman since it had a smaller body of reporters and many fewer European non-officials in its catchment area, and was concerned moreover in protecting a tradition of close connection with Government which it had built up over the years).[2] In this first movement, however, the newspapers of other parts of India, such as Madras and Bombay, produced only a very muted sound, a distant echo of the themes proclaimed loudly and emphatically in Calcutta and Bengal.[3]

The one voice conspicuously silent within the European non-officials' chorus was that of the missionaries. An occasional individual missionary may have been in attendance at a protest meeting and some attention was paid to the position of missionaries in the memorial of European British subjects of Southern India drawn up under Madras Chamber of Commerce auspices - Native magistrates this memorial felt would be religiously prejudiced in court cases affecting missionaries - but missionaries as a body stood outside the conflict. They were far from supporting the Natives who were in favour of the Bill, preferring rather to sit on the fence on an issue which the Indo-European Correspondence for example said, 'is not one in which Catholic principles or

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1. See Englishman 29.10.1883.
2. S. Natarajan, A History of the Press in India, 85.
3. The Statesman, with some support from the Rangoon Gazette, refused to play at all in the anti-Bill concert.

Catholicism are concerned'.[1] If missionaries were irritated by the Bill it was because the ensuing furore hindered the progress of their work of evangelism.[2]

Though the missionaries could afford to stand aloof from the rest of the non-official Britons other fringe elements in the non-official community could not afford that luxury. Thus the domiciled Anglo-Indians and Eurasians, besides being prompted to join the campaign by their own particular irritations, felt that their interests were best served by identifying with the cause taken up by the British business firms which employed so many of them. Armenians, non-British Europeans, other 'whites' and westernized Indian Jews who were linked with the British in business, felt in their turn that it was advantageous to announce themselves as allies.[3] The Prospectus of the newly formed Defence Association, giving full recognition to the spread of the coalition front which it had brought together, summed up the new political organisation's purpose: 'This Association has been formed to watch over and protect the interests and promote the welfare of the following classes of persons in India, namely, - Europeans of whatever nationality, Anglo-Indians, European British subjects not falling within either of these denominations, Americans, Armenians, Eurasians and others associated with Europeans by a community of sympathies and interests'.[4]

Everyone's help was of course welcome in the battle against the Bill and in the Defence Association now being set up. In the future, however, the allies of 1883 were to realise that in the last resort it was each community for itself. 'Eurasians and Armenians had their own Associations to think for their general

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1. See issue 14.3.1883 of this Calcutta paper.

2. See for example CMS R G2 I 1/0 1883-190.

3. The Armenians had a 'proverbial ... genius for commerce', (A. Basil, Armenian Settlements in India, 2), and regarded themselves as 'not ... in any way inferior to the Europeans' (M.J. Seth, Armenians in India, 547). Musleah, 333-4, indicates that the (non-official) British and the majority of Calcutta's Jewry 'seemed to have one common object - business'. Distinct from the dark-skinned Jews in the South and West (the Bene Israel community in and around Bombay and the 'black' Jews in Malabar) Calcutta's lighter-skinned Sephardic Jews, westernized in their outlook, regarded themselves as Europeans. In Bengal at this period there were around 800 Armenians and 500 Jews, see J.A. Bourdillon, Report on the Census of Bengal, 1881., II, 41, 133.

4. The Prospectus is given in further detail in Appendix II.

interests' the lawyer W.K. Eddis was coldly to comment at a Defence Association Council meeting in the early 1890's.[1] Despite its widely encompassing name and the welcome extended in its prospectus, the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association was, primarily, the political party of India's non-official British. For the moment, however, an all-encompassing unity was the goal.

A preliminary meeting by the founders of the EAIDA was held on Monday 5 March four days prior to the first public announcement of its formation.[2] The 'large and representative' forty six-man committee then appointed to 'organise and formulate the details of the Association'[3] included leading members of the Chamber of Commerce, the Trades' Association, the Indian Tea Association, the legal profession - there was likely to be much work for lawyers - and representatives of the Armenian, Eurasian, European and Jewish communities. J.W. Furrell and S.E.J. Clarke the editors of the Englishman and Indian Daily News respectively were also prominently included. At a second meeting on 14 March, Officers were appointed,[4] a prospectus and rules-drafting sub-committee was set up, representatives of British companies were asked to press their viewpoint on their Directors and shareholders at Home, and subscriptions were collected. At the third meeting on the 22nd the drawing up of a ladies' petition to the Queen was announced, and the fourth meeting on 29 March adopted the draft Prospectus and Rules with some amendments and, turning itself into a general meeting of the Association, duly adopted them.[5] The Prospectus had declared the Association's objects to be three-fold, namely, benevolent, economic and political, drawing attention as it did so to the 'extraordinary development, amongst the natives, of associations having a political object'. With Keswick already President de facto, the general meeting elected the lawyer A.B. Miller and the Sheriff R. Miller as Vice Presidents, the

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 8.12.1892, 412. Recent changes by the Bengal Government in rights of trial by jury were under discussion.

2. Indo-European Correspondence, 7.3.1883.

3. It was apparently the Town Hall Committee, enlarged as allowed, and was to undergo some changes in its composition during March.

4. Keswick was formally asked to be the first President.

5. Englishman, 9-31.3.1883.

editors Furrell and Clarke as Honorary Secretaries, and H.W.I. Wood (the Secretary of the Bengal Chamber) and H.B.H. Turner (of Turner, Morrison, & Co.) as Honorary Treasurers. In addition thirteen leading Calcutta men - seven from important agency houses, two lawyers, two leading traders, and Finter and J.G. Apcar representing the Eurasians and Armenians - were elected to act with the new political party's Officers as the Council of the Association.[1]

For its first few meetings the Defence Association Council met in rooms at the Bengal Chamber as the EAIDA's founding Committee had done, but within six months it was meeting at newly taken offices at No. 5, Old Court House Street, Calcutta.[2] The Council of the Association also early turned its attention to the recruitment of a paid staff, and at its first meeting on 31 March, offered the post of Assistant Secretary to W.C. Madge a domiciled Anglo-Indian[3] who had been on the Memorials Committee appointed at the Town Hall meeting and had been well spoken of for the work he had done as one of the Honorary Secretaries of the Prospectus and Rules Sub-Committee. Taking into consideration Madge's position as Secretary of the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association[4] an offer was made to him of a monthly salary of 200 rupees which would be increased to 250 'should the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association amalgamate with the Defence Association'. In the meantime the Council would have no objection to his carrying on his work for the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association.[5] Madge turned down the offer however, on the grounds that he was unable to devote his whole time to the work of the Association and J. Edwards (an assistant with Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co.) was appointed Assistant Secretary in his stead.

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1. Englishman, 30, 31.3.1883.
2. See EAIDA Cl. progs. 31.3.-10.9.1883.
3. E.W. Madge, Henry Derozio the Eurasian Poet and Reformer, 28, quoting family details given in Reis and Rayyet.
4. Eur AIA Report [1883-84],-.
5. EAIDA Cl. progs. 31.3.1883, 1, 2.

By the end of March, when the first wave of public protest had already begun to subside[1] the Defence Association Council set about its work. A prime task was to establish Branch Committees of the Association, and Rangoon was the first place to do so. Following letters from Allahabad by T. Conlan, a High Court advocate, and F.T. Atkins, the Secretary of the United Railway and Government Servants' Association, the offer to form an EAIDA branch there was accepted, as was a similar offer from Simla. By the end of the third week in April branches were also being formed in Bombay, Madras, Karachi, Lahore, Lucknow and Nagpur.[2] Side by side with the formation of its own branches and the glad acceptance of individual support, the Council had at the very start resolved 'that the various Chambers of Commerce, Trades Associations, Planters' Associations and other like Bodies be written to to co-operate with and support the Defence Association and ... to use their machinery to forward the views of the Defence Association'.[3] Muzaffarpur's latest protest meeting on 10 April had, in this spirit, resolved that all European indigo concerns should join the Defence Association. From its side the EAIDA gladly offered its own administrative help in anti-Bill agitation to the various sympathetic bodies, notably to the ITA in the important planters' protest meeting to be held at Silchar on 21 April.[4] A further major task of the Council was to finance its activities and to this purpose a Defence Fund had been set up, with considerable Press publicity, contributions being collected at protest meetings round the country. By 22 March the Fund - aimed at a minimum target of Rs. 300,000 - had reached Rs. 50,000 (the bulk of it contributed by Calcutta Europeans individually or through their businesses), by the month's end Rs. 60,000 and by the end of April - with the help of the newly established branches, of members of sympathetic organisations, and of contributions individually forwarded to the

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1. A mere nine public protest meetings were held in April, one in May and a final one in June in the first phase of the campaign. Similarly, letters on the issue to the Englishman, some 160 in March, fell away to 100 in April, to 60 in May, to under 40 in June and to below 20 in July.
2. EAIDA Cl. progs. 31.3.1883, 3; 13.4.1883, 5; 23.4.1883, 9.
3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 31.3.1883, 2, 3.
4. Ibid., 13.4.1883.

EAIDA - some Rs. 83,000.[1] Only a small part of the Fund came from members' subscriptions to the EAIDA, the bulk representing a very generous total of donations. By the last week of June the Fund had grown to Rs. 125,000,[2] by which time the Association had 615 members of whom 178 were from in or around Calcutta, 306 from elsewhere in India, 12 from abroad, while the remainder, the 119 Associate (non-voting) members in India, were probably mostly from the mofussil.[3]

Parallel with its efforts in India the Defence Association had been concerned with the stirring up of public support in Britain, just as Ripon personally and through his senior officials had been trying to do in the contrary cause. The first Council meeting of the Association on 31 March accordingly resolved 'that copies of the Prospectus and Rules should be sent to the different Home Chambers of Commerce and to the principal newspapers in the United Kingdom'. The London Chamber of Commerce Council had in fact already considered its attitude to the Bill following the receipt of telegrams from the Calcutta and Bombay Chambers of Commerce and of letters from influential members of its own Chamber on the subject.[4] However at a special meeting of members convened on 14 March the London Chamber decided - following a submission that the political aspect of the question predominated over the commercial - that it would be inadvisable for the Chamber to express a collective opinion on the matter and a relevant protest memorial drafted by the Executive Committee was consequently withdrawn.[5] In contrast the Indian Tea Districts Association,

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1. Englishman, 29.3.1883, 30.4.1883.

2. Ibid., 25.6.1883.

3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 28.9.1883 mentioning membership on 22 June.

4. London C/Comm Report 1883, 15. Leading British firms in India and agents of British enterprises there had apparently wasted little time in warning London contacts with Indian interests - in railways, shipping, insurance, banking, tea, indigo, cotton and jute for example - of the danger of the Bill. For examples of these numerous India-Britain business affiliations see Thacker's 1883, and London C/Comm Report 1885, 110, recording representatives appointed to the working committee of the newly formed East India and China Trades Section of that Chamber.

5. Report ibid. 1883, 15. For a report of the proceedings see Madras Mail 6.4.1883. J.R. Bullen-Smith of Matheson & Co., formerly head of Jardine, Skinner's in Calcutta (over which Keswick now presided) and thrice President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in his day, was the main speaker against the Bill.

formed in London on 22 July 1879,[1] resolved, at a meeting on 15 March 1883 chaired by Sir Douglas Forsyth a former member of the Indian Legislative Council, to present a memorial to the Secretary of State against the Bill.[2] Three months later, in June, the Chamber of Commerce in Liverpool also voiced its anti-Bill protest to the India Office.[3]

The meetings of the Chamber of Commerce and Tea Association in London took place against a background in Britain of growing interest (primarily hostile) in the Ilbert Bill, reflected, as in India, in the Press. In the Times there were influential letters against the Bill from Fitzjames Stephen, whose name had been much quoted in Macgregor's telegrams, from Sir Louis Jackson and from the M.P. D.H. Macfarlane, a London partner of Begg, Dunlop & Co., which had extensive indigo interests.[4] The interest roused by the agitation against the Bill (together with promptings from Government circles in India to come out in its defence) also led the Pall Mall Budget, Fortnightly Review, Nineteenth Century, Contemporary Review, Blackwood's, Spectator, Saturday Review and other magazines to feature articles and news on the Bill during the course of the year, while for the returned Anglo-Indians[5] Allen's Indian Mail and Homeward Mail brought the 1883 drama to their doorsteps.

The sensationalisms in Macgregor's telegrams also sparked off questions in Parliament[6] - they were fretting and fuming as

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1. See Allen's Indian Mail 28.7.1879.

2. Indian Daily News 13.4.1883 and Englishman 16.4.1883. The memorial preparation sub-committee comprised Forsyth, General H. Hopkinson and Colonel R.H. Keeting (both former Commissioners of Assam), Dr Berry White a former civil surgeon in Dibrugarh, C. Sanderson a former Government Solicitor in Calcutta, and George Williamson who was closely connected with the Calcutta agency house of Williamson, Magor, & Co.

3. J. & P. Dept. P., 1046/1883, 2/1884.

4. Pro-Bill views were set out in the letter to this paper by Sir George Campbell who, like Jackson, was a former Calcutta High Court Judge. The letters appeared in the Times on 1, 2, 3 and 8 March and aroused great interest in India where they were eagerly perused some three weeks later.

5. In contra-distinction to the term 'Anglo-Indian' used in an Indian context-relating strictly to the domiciled British there (though the expression was often loosely used to refer to all British-born in the country), in Britain the term was applied generally to Britons returned from India.

6. See Hansard 1883, 3rd series, CCLXXVI, 304-1723, and CCLXXVII, 214-5, 374.

Gladstone put it[1] - and a debate on the matter, with Lytton as the main speaker for the opposition, took place in the Lords on 19 April.[2] In the Commons, however, Ashmead Bartlett was unable to persuade the Government to set aside time for discussion of the Bill. He continued to press for a debate - after holding off for a while at the Defence Association's urging in the hope of receiving the Local Government Opinions Report to support him,[3] and only finally secured discussion time on the Bill by virtue of some remarks interpolated into the Indian Revenue Accounts debate on 22 August just prior to the prorogation of the House.[4]

Following the example of the London Chamber of Commerce and the Indian Tea Districts Association more Ilbert Bill meetings were held in London. The mixed Indian and British membership of the East India Association[5] held three 'neutral' meetings on the Bill on 18 May and 13 and 27 June giving both supporters and opponents a chance to air their views. James Branson, arrived now from India, was among the speakers at the last meeting.[6] The anti-Bill campaign in Britain took off in earnest however at the first Assam Dinner held on 29 May at the newly opened Eberle's Army and Navy Hotel in Victoria Street, London. The meeting was 'a larger ... and more thoroughly representative ... gathering of [former] official and non-official ... Anglo-Indians ... than any that has assembled to dine together in London for many years past'. The speeches of the former Assam Sanitary Commissioner

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1. Gladstone to Ripon 17.4.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/5, 64a.

2. Hansard, 3rd series, CCLXXVII, 1735-1802. The debate ended without a division.

3. EAIDA Cl. progs. of 19 June mention sending off a telegram to Bartlett asking him to postpone discussion until he had received the Report on Local Government Opinions on the Bill. This Report, though expected sooner, was though only published on 8 September.

4. Hansard 1883, 3rd series, CCLXXXIII, 1670-1688. For a review of the Home Government's attitude to the Bill and its place within British politics generally in 1883 - (Ireland and Egypt were the main overseas worries in the year) - see E.A. Hirschmann, The Ilbert Bill Controversy as a Crisis in Imperial Relationships.

5. Mehrotra, 23-334, gives some account of this association's history.

6. For proceedings of these meetings see Times 19.5.1883, Englishman 29.6., 12.7. and 20.7.1883, Allen's Indian Mail 23.5.1883, and Home News 15.6., 25.6. and 29.6.1883.

Surgeon-General A.C.C. de Renzy and Dr Berry White expressed the general alarm at the Ilbert Bill proposal. Roper Lethbridge, the former Government of India Press Commissioner, noted the intense and unanimous feelings with which attacks upon the Bill had been greeted that evening and in turn spoke strongly against the measure.[1] In its strength of numbers and the authority of the views expressed, the Dinner was reminiscent of the St. Andrew's Day dinners in Calcutta.

Just as the Calcutta Town Hall meeting led to the formation of the EAIDA so the Assam dinner led to the creation of a London Committee for that Association. It was Lethbridge, stirred by the intense feeling against the Ilbert Bill he had witnessed at the dinner, who arranged a meeting in the banqueting suite at St. James's Hall, Regent Street, on 25 June 'for the purpose of concerting and adopting such measures as may be deemed advisable, in order to obtain the withdrawal of the Bill'.[2] In this initiative he had been backed by financial help requested and received from the EAIDA Council. As Keswick reported to the Council on 22 June: 'a Telegram has been sent to that Gentleman guaranteeing his Expenses in connexion with meetings to be held in London up to a sum of £100'. The Council also instructed Lethbridge that the Association was strongly opposed to a compromise. Permanent arrangements for Lethbridge to act for the Association were, however, for the moment, deferred.[3] Thus financially supported, and guided as to policy, Lethbridge prepared and sent out a circular to Anglo-Indian residents in England[4] and convened the St. James's Hall meeting in June which was chaired by Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, a former member of the Indian Legislative Council.[5]

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1. For reports see Allen's Indian Mail 30.5., 6.6. and 13.6.1883.

2. See meeting notice in Times, 20.6.1883.

3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 22.6.1883, 22.

4. Ibid. A further £1,350 was to be remitted to Lethbridge for expenses by September.

5. A strong anti-Bill letter from Arbuthnot had appeared in the Pall Mall Budget of 11.5.1883. Short accounts of the careers of Arbuthnot and Lethbridge are given in W.F.B. Laurie, Sketches of some Distinguished Anglo-Indians, 197, 245ff.

The meeting - England's equivalent of that held four months previously in Calcutta's Town Hall - had received very wide publicity[1] and was very well attended, many coming straight on to it from the Oxford and Cambridge cricket match.[2] The speakers, as the Indian Press pointed out, disclaimed all possibility of a compromise[3] and Lethbridge in his address reinforced this intransigence by reporting the 'thousand odd letters' he had received during the last few weeks in opposition to the Bill. With its mind made up beforehand the meeting resolved that the Bill was disapproved of and that Government should be moved to withdraw it, that the Secretary of State for India be requested to receive a deputation to lay before him the grounds of objections to the Bill, and that an Executive Committee be appointed to carry out the meeting's objects.[4]

The opposition which had gathered behind the Committee was formidable in number and in quality. The Times had published a first list of the anti-Ilbert Bill General Committee on 20 June which contained nearly 300 names.[5] By the 24th the 'complete first list' featured 475 names and by 6 July the General Committee had grown to a total of 655.[6] Twenty days later it was over 700 (consisting of about 250 non-officials and some 450 ex-officials) and by the beginning of August it numbered nearly 800.[7] This total included both ex-officials and non-officials returned from India, and those in Britain interested in Indian affairs, representing in both cases men linked with Parliament, the City and

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1. See issues 25 and 26.6.1883 of Times, Daily Telegraph, Standard, Daily News, Morning Post, Morning Advertiser, Daily Chronicle, Evening News, Evening Standard, Globe, Pall Mall Gazette, Echo and St. James's Gazette. The provincial Press in many cities was quick to follow suit.

2. See Englishman 20.7.1883, report of London correspondent.

3. Englishman, 20.7.1883.

4. The Executive Committee of 50 members at the start jumped to 80 by 6 July. It comprised ex-officials and military men, together with newspapermen, businessmen and lawyers.

5. The notice mentioned that the names of Peers and Members of Parliament had been purposely omitted. Applications to join the Committee, the notice indicated, could be made to Lethbridge, the Honorary Secretary, or to Berry White, E.T. Roberts, (a lawyer), Generals Hopkinson or De Renzy, or to one D. Nelson in Belfast.

6. See Englishman 20.7.1883 and 27.7.1883. The information, as with much other news appearing in this paper on the English scene, was supplied by the paper's London correspondent.

7. Times 27.7.1883, Englishman 4.8.1883.

Commerce. (Such groups supplemented by interested intellectuals, a few women and those connected with the India Office comprised the India interest sector in Britain at the time). Whereas in India, where the veto on British officials and regulations in the case of the military had precluded them from siding publicly with their non-official compatriots in opposing the Bill,[1] at the St. James's Hall meeting and on the General Committee list it was the proliferation of ex-officials and military men that stood out.

In India such overt support for the Defence Association could not be given by those in official positions. But a new incident involving Branson was to show that some officials at least were prepared to go a very long way in expressing their antagonism to the Ilbert Bill. In the months after his Town Hall speech Branson was a hero or a villain depending on one's reactions and the colour of one's skin. Following his 'apology', he had written to the Defence Association 'declining the compliment of a public dinner for reasons which commended the approval of the Council'.[2] Such belated discretion was no doubt partly prompted by the resolution of the Indian attorneys of the Calcutta High Court who, meeting on 2 March, had resolved 'henceforth to hold no communication with Mr. Branson, professional or otherwise'.[3] On 19 April Garth, the Chief Justice, sent for the Native members of the Calcutta Bar. He glossed over the jibes uttered at the Town Hall meeting and urged them 'out of pure good feeling' to drop the resolution they had adopted following what 'they considered to be' the insult offered them and their countrymen by Branson. Refusing so to stultify themselves - despite Garth's reproval of their illegal and improper resolution - the attorneys agreed merely to withdraw their resolution after Branson had left

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1. James Dunlop-Smith, Private Secretary to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, mentioned in a letter to his mother that the Government had sent a circular to the officials requesting them 'to abstain from anything like a popular expression of their policy' on the Bill, see Dunlop-Smith C. MSS.Eur.F.166/6, letter 29.8.1883, 1.

2. EAIDA Cl. progs. 13.4.1883, 4.

3. The meeting is reported in Bengalee, 10.3.1883.

India, as he was shortly to do.[1] No reproof was uttered by Garth however, when, eleven days later, among the vast crowd 'of all sections of the community' present at the jetties to bid goodbye to Branson and thus to identify themselves with his stance, were Mr Justice McDonnell and Mr Justice Norris and his wife, rubbing shoulders with the leaders of the Defence Association and J.C. Macgregor.[2]

Of all the Calcutta High Court judges Norris was the most translucently open in the support which he gave to opposition to the Ilbert Bill. His sentence of two months' imprisonment in the saligram idol contempt of court case passed upon the former civil servant Surendranath Banerjea, now editor of the Bengalee,[3] was regarded by Ripon as unduly severe. As Ripon observed, 'it is scarcely possible to doubt that it was due in great degree to that bad race feeling which not a few of the Judges of the High Court are just now doing much, I fear, to stimulate'.[4] Norris had made himself conspicuous as an opponent of the Ilbert Bill, allowing his wife to take a leading part in the Ladies' Petition against it, as Ripon reported.[5] An inaugural meeting of the leading Calcutta ladies who wished to prepare an Ilbert Bill protest memorial to the Queen had in fact taken place on 26 March with the wives of the Judges Norris and Tottenham amongst the nine present. The meeting heard that the Defence Association would be prepared to give organisational aid in obtaining signatures and would undertake also to defray any expenses such a petition might incur and Mrs Tottenham as Honorary Secretary was invited to

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1. Homeward Mail 23.5.1883, and ibid. 30.5.1883 noting formal withdrawal of the boycotting resolution. The Chief Justice in reproving the attorneys had glossed over Branson's racialist attack. In much the same way the Indian Daily News 4.4.1883 had denounced a bitter speech by the Indian barrister Lalmohan Ghose at a meeting in Dacca on 29 March but had ignored the racial speech by Branson made in Dacca the day before which had prompted Ghose's outburst. See also B.C. Pal, Memories of My Life and Times, 410-11.

2. See report of Branson's departure in Homeward Mail, 23.5.1883.

3. The case arose out of a contemptuous article against Norris in the Bengalee 28.4.1883 based on a report in Brahmo Public Opinion.

4. Ripon to Kimberley 10.5.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 139. In late March, a 'position vacant' notice in the Englishman, with its thinly disguised insult to Banerjee, had marked another such example of bad race feeling.

5. Ripon to Kimberley 10.5.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 139-40.

instruct the ladies in Bombay and Madras and seek their co-operation. In a larger meeting held five days later Mr Justice McDonnell's wife had joined the group alongside Mrs Branson.[1] The Defence Association then used its contacts to circulate the petition,[2] and 'an influential party' called on Rivers Thompson, the Lieutenant-Governor, who was known to be against the Bill to ask him 'to allow [his] wife to head the list of signatures'.[3] On Thompson's refusal it was Norris's wife who was to become the figurehead and to forward the memorial[4] with 5,758 signatures.[5] A parallel memorial addressed to the Indian Government by European ladies residing in Behar, and headed by the signature of Mrs Hudson, wife of the Secretary of the Behar Planters' Association obtained 732 signatures.[6] The four Defence Association memorials to the Viceroy, the Secretary of State, the House of Commons and the Lords, drawn up in accordance with the Calcutta Town Hall resolutions, and thereafter widely circulated, secured some 12,000 to 15,000 signatures.[7] Many other anti-Bill memorials,

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1. Englishman, 2.4.1883. Annette Beveridge had been early off the mark, the entry in her diary for 12 March 1883 recording 'sent off petition against C.P.C. Bill'. See Annette and Henry Beveridge C. MSS.Eur.C.176/59,-.

2. EAIDA Cl. progs., 23.4.1883, 7.

3. Thompson to Sir Alfred Lyall (Lt.-Governor, NWP), 3.4.1883, Lyall C. MSS.Eur.F.132/41,-.

4. India Home Progs. Judicial, June 1883, vol. 2045,68, progs. nos. 146, 147.

5. Allen's Indian Mail, 26.6.1883. The text of the memorial is given in ibid. 23.5.1883.

6. See P.P. 1884, LX, 591.

7. To Viceroy 11,783 signatures, to Secretary of State 12,254, to Commons 14,989, to Lords 13,139. The protest memorial of the European British subjects of Southern India obtained 2,452 signatures. For texts of the memorials see P.P. 1884, LX, 623-5, 632-644. At the start of the 1880's there were in India some 89,000 UK-born persons, of whom some 57,000 were in the Army and Navy and some 3,000 Civil Servants and establishment clergy. Of the 29,000 non-official balance here, there were around 17,000 men, of whom just under 5,000 (including some military or officials) were aged up to 19, and 12,000 women of whom around 9,000 were aged 20 and above. The domiciled Anglo-Indians together with a small element of 'elsewhere'-born British totalled some 51,000 of whom a number were military or officials, and non-UK European-born numbered 6,400 and Americans 1,500. African-born persons were just under 4,000 of whom some element were of 'European' type and Eurasians numbered around 62,000. See Report on the Census of British India, ... 1881., I, 222-4, 468-70.

the consequence of the opposition meetings, were flowing into Government from European and Eurasian associations and communities around the country.[1]

Of course the agitation surrounding the Bill was by no means one-sided, and Indians, spurred on the more by the magnitude of the European opposition, had been quick to demonstrate to Government how gratefully they approved the wisdom of the proposed measure and to express their fervent hopes that Government would persist in passing the measure through. The Indian Press, particularly in Bengal, right from the start in early February had welcomed the Ilbert Bill both as removing a disgraceful legal anomaly from the statute book and as a further demonstration of Ripon's high-mindedness and sense of justice.[2] Thereafter, the joint resolution from the six native associations on 8 March, then the numerously signed Tamil resolution and at the end of the month the Dacca meeting addressed by Lalmohan Ghose, a future President of Congress, were perhaps the highlights of the Indian support for the Bill in this early period. In March, Indian Press interest in the Bill which had been lapsing a little, was revived by the spate of the European agitation, and more Indian newspapers spoke up for the Bill each week, many out of anger.[3] Numbers of these papers urged Indians to support the Bill with meetings and petitions of their own,[4] and during the spring and summer - as A.O. Hume and politically sophisticated Indians analysed the lessons to be learnt from the controversy - many pro-Bill meetings were indeed held and memorials of support forwarded to Government.[5]

Government was quick to seize upon the restrained and dignified tones emanating from the meetings - a welcome change from the raucousness with which Town Hall sentiments had been expressed. 'Nothing could be more moderate and courteous than the language of the speakers', Ripon informed Kimberley regarding the meeting

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1. The Ilbert Bill memorials of March to August 1883 are given in P.P. 1884, LX, 552ff, and some non-official opinions on the Bill are included with the Local Government opinion correspondence in ibid., 131ff.
2. Mehrotra, 349.
3. Hirschman, 140.
4. Ibid., 143.
5. Mehrotra, 350-6, P.P. 1884, LX, 553-683.

organised by leading Parsi, Hindoo and Muslim residents in Bombay on 28 April, the speeches affording 'a most marked contrast to the violence of Mr. Branson & Co. at Calcutta'. The Bombay meeting in question seemed to the Viceroy to be in no way inferior to the best class of public meetings at home. 'Men like Mr. Tyabjee and Mr. Mehta and Mr. Telang are not to be deluded by Delhi Assemblages and Imperial titles, and rubbish of that sort; but they are prepared to accept such a policy as mine' even though it was to proceed by apparently excessively small and cautious steps.[1] 'To my mind' wrote Ripon in this 4 May letter,[2] 'it is the height of folly to forget, in our administration of India, that the best educated among the natives are men of this stamp, and that such men are increasing in number every day'. The Indian dominated Bombay Mill-owners' Association also acted to counter the Bombay Chamber's attitude a little earlier and approved the Bill by resolution, 'the only Europeans present viz: Mr. George Cotton and Mr. John Greaves, both of the firm of Messrs. Greaves, Cotton and Co dissenting'.[3] A public meeting of native inhabitants in Poona in June summed up the language and viewpoint of the various Indian meetings in expressing 'an humble hope that the proposed legislative measure will soon be passed into law, without any compromise'.[4]

In Britain the supporters of Ripon's administration, concerned with the publicity given to the St. James's Hall meeting, felt the necessity of demonstrating the public opinion that existed on the side of Ripon. The British India Committee which had been established in the previous April and was under the chairmanship of Hodgson Pratt, a former Company servant, held a preliminary meeting on 19 July at the Westminster Palace Hotel in London which led

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1. The meeting's proceedings are given in P.P. 1884, LX, 598-621. Budrudin Tyabjee, Pherozeshah M. Mehta and Kashinath Trimbak Telang were leading Indian lawyers in Bombay and the first two were to become in time Presidents of the Indian National Congress. Mehrotra, 383, notes that Bombay's rather sudden rise to prominence in national politics in the early 1880's was due chiefly to the leadership provided by this famous 'legal trio'.

2. Ripon to Kimberley 4.5.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 130-2.

3. Bombay Mill-owners' Association Report 1881-2, 10, giving proceedings of annual general meeting 9.5.1883.

4. See memorial of this Poona meeting in P.P. 1884, LX, 647.

to a meeting in favour of the Ilbert Bill in the Memorial Hall library in Farringdon Street on the 23rd. This small meeting, presided over by Sir John Phear a former Calcutta judge, with a number of M.P.s present, passed resolutions in support of that Bill and of Ripon.[1] A larger, follow-up meeting, though in numbers still considerably less than those at the St. James's Hall meeting, was held nine days later on 1 August at Willis's Rooms, King Street, under British India Committee auspices. Some thirty liberal minded M.P.s were present, alongside churchmen, a few ex-military men, academics and many ladies as well as Lord Stanley of Alderley, Raja Rampal Singh and several other Indians.[2] Lalmohan Ghose, sent to England in May by the United Indian Committee set up in Calcutta a month previously,[3] made the most noted speech after that of John Bright who was the star of the meeting. Were the 1833 and 1858 promises made to the Indians to be acted upon or broken? queried Ghose following Bright's references to these matters. His countrymen regarded the Bill 'as a sort of test question' he remarked.[4] The radical Bright, who had already spoken previously for the cause at Glasgow University and Birmingham Town Hall on 22 March and 14 June,[5] spoke passionately of the desirability of governing India by a policy of generosity and justice, as Lord Ripon was doing. The meeting passed resolutions of confidence in Ripon's administration

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1. For reports of these two meetings see Times, 20.7.1883, 24.7.1883.

2. Stanley was Vice President of the East India Association and Rampal Singh the President of the National Representative Committee. Sir Wilfrid Lawson M.P. who had formed the British India Committee, Henry Fawcett the parliamentary 'Member for India', and Lady Hobhouse, were among those present at the meeting. For detail on the two Committees see Mehrotra, 329-61.

3. Mehrotra, 353, 356.

4. Section LXXXVII of the 1833 East India Company Charter had stated: 'And be it enacted, That no Native of the said Territories, nor any natural-born Subject of His Majesty resident therein, shall, by reason only of his Religion, Place of Birth, Descent, Colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any Place, Office, or Employment under the said Company'. Queen Victoria's Proclamation in November 1858 had declared: 'And it is Our further Will that, so far as may be, Our Subjects, of whatever Race or Creed, be freely and impartially admitted to Offices in our Service, the Duties of which they may be qualified, by their education, ability, and integrity, duly to discharge'.

5. See reports in Times 23.3.1883, 15.6.1883.

and specific support to him in his Ilbert Bill and Local Self Government schemes.

The liberal or radical supporters of the Ilbert Bill in Britain had done their best, but in strength of numbers the Willis's Rooms meeting lagged far behind the St. James's Hall assembly and was distinguished by the lack of any direct Indian experience amongst most of those present. It was wishful reporting on the part of the liberal Pall Mall Gazette which contrasted the 'powerful' Willis's Rooms meeting with the 'feeble echo of the angry gatherings in Calcutta' and the 'subsiding agitation' which the St. James's Hall assembly epitomised.[1]

Much more significant than public speeches at meetings in favour of the Bill was the steady support of Ripon by the Secretary of State. On 26 July the deputation called for at the St. James's Hall meeting waited on Kimberley and presented to him the memorial of the London Committee of the Anglo-Indian Association against the Ilbert Bill. The deputation was introduced by L.P. Pugh the M.P. (he was the brother of G.H.P. Evans)[2] and the other members were Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, W.S. Seton-Karr a former Indian Legislative Council member, J.R. Bullen-Smith,[3] J.M. Maclean the former editor of the Bombay Gazette, Major-General H. Hopkinson and Colonel G.B. Malleson. No satisfaction however was obtained from Kimberley who stated that the British Government approved of the Bill's principle and that he was not prepared to express an opinion as to possible modifications before he knew the official opinions of the subordinate governments in India on the matter.[4] Despite the efforts of

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1. Pall Mall Gazette 25-26.6.1883, 2.8.1883. The Willis's Rooms meeting was prominently reported and commented on in the Times, Daily Telegraph and other leading London newspapers of 2 August. The Globe felt that the 'only excuse' for the pro-Bill action of the Radical section of England was 'blind ignorance'. A large anti-Ilbert Bill workmen's meeting was held in Limehouse, East London, on the morrow of the Willis's Rooms meeting, see Times 3.8.1883.

2. J. Foster, Men-at-the-Bar, 144, 380.

3. Around this time Ripon was writing to Kimberley to see whether he could 'do anything' with firms in England such as Jardine, Skinner & Co., see letter 23.7.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 216.

4. For report of interview see Times 27.7.1883.

Lethbridge and the expenditure by him of £315 on advertising in England,[1] tangible results, so far as their influence on the Home Government was concerned, had not been achieved.

In India opposition to the Bill had died away in inaction, public meetings terminating with one very belated protest in early June, that of the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce. The European Press too had to scrape about for issues to keep flagging interest alive: the scandal of the 'cooked' Reuter's telegram,[2] the Bombay Native meeting, the contempt case, some rape and violence cases of Natives against Europeans,[3] and the mid-July Bengali meetings following S.N. Banerjea's release from prison on the 4th,[4] all served to keep the anti-Government and anti-Native sentiments going in the campaign lull, along with some fifty letters from 'Britannicus' which were the mainstay of the correspondence columns. Ripon, however, had from a much earlier date begun privately to sound out the opinions of his Governors and local heads of administration on the nature and extent of the opposition to the Ilbert Bill. Fergusson, Governor of Bombay, was first to report, on 4 March 1883, saying he had heard that strong opinions had been expressed in conversation, but that he didn't think that 'anything will be said here so strong as has been said in Calcutta'. Lyall a fortnight later argued that in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh both the Press and the non-official public would be fairly well disposed to listen to arguments stressing the futility of agitation.[5] (He wrote privately to Rivers Thompson and to Chief Commissioner C.A. Elliott in the key provinces of Bengal and Assam to rally round Ripon in his hour of difficulty and put down the European opposition to the measure. This he did despite his own annoyance with the Viceroy for having

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 23.7.1883, 4.

2. The Indian Government had paid for a Reuter's telegram to England reporting on the Council meeting of 9 March. In this telegram the opposition speech of Evans, which lasted for two and a half hours, had been dismissed in a passing mention. See Macgregor's report in the Times 12.3.1883 and P.P. 1883, LI, [C.-3655.] , 749-50.

3. See Englishman 12.6.-28.6.1883.

4. The large meeting at Beadon Street, Calcutta on 17 July - attendance estimates varied from three to ten thousand - attracted special attention.

5. Fergusson to Ripon 4.3.1883 and Lyall to Ripon 18.3.1883, in Ind. MPD BP7/6, 148a, 170.

bracketed him with Ashley Eden in the 9th March Council as mainly responsible by their early advice for the preparation of the Bill:[1] he did his best by private letters to England discreetly to undo this impression, though without harming the Viceroy).[2] Aitchison, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, was less encouraging. The European community in Lahore, he reported, was thoroughly united in their disapproval, and whether the Bill was good or bad, necessary or unnecessary, they would have none of it. Grant Duff from Madras also reported much opposition, which was excited not just by the Ilbert Bill but by the Lytton Rules, the growing exclusion of Europeans from the Uncovenanted Service and by the Local Self-Government policy.[3] By 24 July official soundings, 350 opinions from the districts, had reached Simla,[4] and were then summarised by Ilbert. In an annexure to his Note of 25 July Ilbert showed that 168 opinions were utterly hostile, 55 held the Bill to be inopportune or impolitic, 54 were agreeable to its introduction but only in modified form, while just 73 opinions were substantially favourable to the Bill as framed.[5] The great majority of lower-level British officials, not consulted in 1882, were now seen to be either 'hostile' or in the 'inopportune or impolitic' class.[6] In the light of this analysis, which reinforced the impressions they had been forming in the past months, the Executive Council decided to discard the section of the Bill giving discretionary powers to Local Governments[7] and

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1. See Lyall to his sister Barbara Webb 13.3.1883, to Rivers Thompson 10.3.1883, to Sir Ashley Eden 14.3.1883, and Elliott to Lyall 9.4.1883 acknowledging Lyall's 1 April letter to him in Lyall C. MSS.Eur.F.132/9.-, and MSS.Eur.F.132/41,-.

2. Lyall to B. Webb 7.5.1883, Lyall C. MSS.Eur.F.132/9,-.

3. Aitchison to Ripon 23.3.1883, Grant Duff to Ripon 2.4.1883 enclosure, Ind.[MPD] BP7/6, 172a, 197.

4. Mentioned by Ripon in Legislative Council 7.12.1883.

5. Ripon P. XCIII, 60-64.

6. See for example Opinion of J. Beames, Burdwan Division Commissioner, in P.P. 1884, LX, 326, noting: 'All the European officers whom I have consulted are unanimously of opinion that the principle of the Bill is absolutely indefensible, and that no inconvenience has ever arisen from the present state of the law. I am also of this opinion'. For a deep contemporary analysis of the legal background to the Bill and a detailed review of arguments in favour and against it, see 22.12.1883 Opinion of Mr Justice C.D. Field in ibid., 747-85.

7. The inclusion in the Bill of reference to cantonment magistrates had been regarded as a mistake in drafting.

to recommend that the Bill be confined to native District Magistrates and Sessions Judges, with the High Court having the powers to transfer cases 'in the interests of justice'.[1]

These results were striking enough for the Government, but they were followed by a new stirring within the non-official community in anticipation of publication of the Local Opinions. The decks had been cleared for action by the Defence Association on 4 July when an Extraordinary General Meeting was held to change the Associations' Rules so as to allow representatives of the newly formed branches to sit on the Council. A Special General Meeting followed on 6 August in the Town Hall to confirm the change, and to hear Keswick and the Association's Vice President A.B. Miller call on the 144 members present for renewed vigorous activity, since it was to be feared that the Government were mistaking quietness for indifference.[2] At the half yearly general meeting of the Bengal Chamber the next day, Keswick, the Chairman, reminded members about the Bill,[3] and another Great Indignation Meeting was soon in preparation. This new meeting, second only in importance to the 28 February meeting,[4] and well publicised for a week beforehand, was held at the Calcutta Town Hall on 23 August and served to launch a new phase of the campaign of opposition to the Bill. A partial summary of the Local Opinions given by the Under Secretary of State Cross in the Commons on the 20th and Gladstone's remarks in the House on the 21st that the Anglo-Indian spirit of ascendancy must be checked[5] came in for sharp comment. Two resolutions were passed: the first called for the withdrawal of the Bill or, if Government would not so consent, for the immediate publication in extenso of the Local

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1. See Despatch of 10 August 1883 in P.P. 1884, LX, 691-2.

2. EAIDA Cl. progs. 23.4. and 23.5.1883, 7, 11-15, and Englishman 2.7. and 7.8.1883.

3. Bengal C/Comm Report half year ended 30.4.1883, 7.

4. Its proceedings were duly recorded in the Englishman of 24 August and the meeting's memorial noted an attendance of 2,500 to 3,000 European British subjects. There was a conspicuous presence of women.

5. See Hansard, 3rd series, CCLXXXIII, 1537 and Englishman 22 and 23.8.1883. 'Some influential friend should persuade Mr Gladstone to ... hold his tongue' remarked the Punjab official Dunlop-Smith in a letter shortly after to his mother. See Dunlop-Smith C. MSS.Eur.F.166/6, letter 29.8.1883, 1.

Government Opinions, Government to abstain from proceeding further on the Bill till Parliament had considered them. The second called for the drawing up and circulation of a new memorial to the Governor-General in Council.

The lead given by the Defence Association was notably backed by the bulk of the Eurasians and Anglo-Indians, Finter, as in February, playing a principal part in the proceedings - and this despite the personal support for the Bill given by D.S. White, President of the Madras branch of the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association,[1] (as a tactical move to win Government approval for other Eurasian demands?).[2] And if White defected, F.T. Atkins now swung his United Railway and Government Servants' Association behind the EAIDA. Atkins was General Secretary to the Allahabad-based Association which, founded in 1874 had grown by 1883 to include in its forty branches[3] a considerable number of the 4,000 or so Europeans and 4,000 Eurasians employed on the railways.[4] The railwaymen had begun to come out against the Ilbert Bill in March, by April Atkins was in direct touch with the Defence Association Council, and during the summer he was invited through Furrell to go to Britain as a delegate of India's railwaymen to put the Defence Association's case against the Bill to the British working man. Atkins accepted the invitation, which was confirmed at the Defence Association Council meeting on 10 August, and the condition that while in England his actions were to 'be controlled by the Home Committee'.[5] At the Town Hall meeting of 23 August Atkins, now delegate for eight railway workers' meetings[6] and the Defence Association, emphasised in a keynote speech his determination to go Home 'and tell them the truth'. Hudson, the Indigo

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1. Englishman 23.8.1883.

2. EurAIA Report [1883-84], 10, mentions White's visit to England in the spring during which he intended to agitate the Eurasian question. In the years to come the Madras Eurasian leadership was to draw close to Congress.

3. Notice in Calcutta Magazine April 1883, [82].

4. StMMPr 1882-83, 283. This employment reflected the steady development of India's railways. By March 1883 10,300 miles were open for traffic and 2,300 awaiting completion. See Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), Indian Railways Centenary Exhibition Souvenir, and F.S. Stanton, Preliminary Administration Report on the Railways in India for 1882-83, 1.

5. EAIDA Cl. progs. 10.8.1883, 29, 30.

6. Englishman 24.8.1883. The first two of the eight meetings had been those at Buxar and Asansol on 20 August.

Association Secretary, initially rather circumspect, also chose the Town Hall meeting to announce, through Keswick, that the Behar Indigo Planters would stand firm for no compromise. To Rivers Thompson he had long previously written privately 'once admit the principle, [of Native mofussil criminal jurisdiction over Europeans], and all Native Officials must get these powers, and then we know what will happen',[1] while in his letter to Keswick published in the Englishman of 27 August, which made him a hero overnight, he warned that lynch law would be applied to the first Native who tried a planter without the planters' consent. Henceforth support from Behar would be demonstratively more extreme than that of Assam.

In this new phase of the movement in India, which was to last till 15 November, thirty six meetings in all were held. Both in Behar and Assam the convening of new protest meetings was delayed by the floods, but thirteen railwaymen's meetings were held across India between 20 August and 3 September,[2] and there were other notable meetings at Chittagong, Allahabad and Muzaffarpur on 23, 27 and 30 August, at Kurseong and Silchar on 3 and 29 September whilst a Eurasian protest meeting at Rangoon on 4 September similarly attracted notable attention.[3] There was a general stress placed in the renewed campaign upon legitimate agitation and co-operation with the Defence Association to secure the Bill's withdrawal. But, more significantly, there was also forward planning: should the Bill become law the call was for continuation of support to effect its repeal.[4] Meanwhile, with the publication of the Local Opinions Report on 8 September, spokesmen for the community were armed with a wealth of statements against the Bill for an intensified attack on the Government. The attack of the non-official British was all the sharper for the latest scandal to emerge, a Government inspired Reuter's telegram to London, which in summarizing the Local Opinions Report had

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1. Undated copy of Hudson's letter to Thompson enclosed with Thompson to Lyall 3.4.1883, Lyall C. MSS.Eur.F.132/41.-.

2. Atkins, nineteen years of service in India behind him, left for England on 4 September.

3. The latest meetings were well reported in the European Press.

4. See for example resolution passed at the Silchar meeting on 29 September.

quite distorted it by reporting 114 opinions in favour of the Bill and a mere 26 against![1]

At the end of September the Defence Association added its strength - it had now 973 members[2] - to the scattered and sectional protest efforts of the mofussil, its Council on the 28th passing five important resolutions. These stressed that even a modified Bill was unacceptable, that a further endeavour of the Government to force the measure into law would be an affront to collective public opinion, that the Defence Association and the European community would maintain strenuous opposition, that the legal power of the Indian legislature to pass such a Bill would be challenged, and that should the Bill nevertheless be passed there would be a collective duty to aid with funds and moral support any member of the community who refused to plead to a mofussil criminal jurisdiction.[3]

The defiant note was also echoed in many letters to the papers from Volunteers wishing to know whether they _really_ had to stand bodyguard for the Viceroy.[4] A letter to the _Englishman_ of 20 October signed with the Volunteers' motto 'Defence not Defiance' went further, suggesting resistance to the exercise by

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1. The 26 should have read 206. See _Englishman_ 10-13.9.1883 and A. Rattray (Reuter's Simla agent) to Primrose 8.10.1883 in _Ind.[MPD]_ BP7/6, 131. The telegram was of course seized upon as 'cooked' like that about the 9 March Council meeting.

2. This compared with 615 on 22 June.

3. _EAIDA Cl. progs._ 28.9.1883, 45, and _Englishman_ 1.10.1883. For full text see Appendix III. The same day, 28 September, the Indian Tea Association's Council, whose members were the same as or closely connected with the Defence Association leaders, resolved also to aid with funds and moral support any member of the community who should exercise his right of refusing to plead to a criminal jurisdiction. See report of Sibsagar protest meeting of 15 November in _Englishman_ 1.12.1883.

4. In August and September together only some 50 letters about the Bill appeared in the _Englishman_. In October, as the time of the Viceroy's return to Calcutta was seen approaching, the letters increased to over 60 (28 of them alone concerned with the Volunteers issue), later again falling away to some 60 for November and December combined, and with a bare handful contributed in January when the fight was over, bar the final formalities. The letters dealt with a variety of topics, from Government Local Opinions and the Eurasian viewpoint to cries for no compromise. As previously, 'Britannicus' remained the outstanding correspondent, with the stream of his letters, rather than the heavy legal detail in many of them, representing their main importance in keeping campaign morale enthusiastic and alive.

Natives of criminal jurisdiction in the Presidency towns too. On 26 October, moreover, that exponent of resistance Hudson of Behar,[1] with T.B. Curtis of Darjeeling and W. Aitchison of Cachar, was appointed to the Defence Association Council. However when mofussil groups in Bengal and Assam asked the Council how defiant a course should be proposed at their intended local meetings, Council felt unable, for the moment, to make any specific recommendation. In reply, moreover, to numerous enquiries from individual members as to the future course of action of the Association, Council opted to hold its fire and resolved to defer calling another public meeting to decide on the matter 'pending an intimation as to the intentions of Government'.[2]

The next move had to come from Ripon. From a confident feeling at the end of July[3] when little resistance to the Bill was apparent, he had been reduced by the Town Hall and other meetings to a state of nerves. He therefore seized upon the request made in the Town Hall memorial for a delay while the Local Opinions were considered by Parliament,[4] as backing for his own urgently renewed pleas by letter and telegram to the Home Government to intervene. If only the Europeans in India could see that the Commons had by a clear majority shown complete confidence in the Indian Government on the Bill his worries would be largely over.[5] Ripon thus advocated postponement of the Bill's progress till Parliament at least was in session and so able to discuss or debate it.[6] Kimberley however felt it better to proceed with the Bill at once, since to do otherwise would 'have the appearance of weakness'[7] and Prime Minister Gladstone,

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1. After Hudson, R.C. Walker of Purneah was the campaign movement leader most prominent in the region.

2. EAIDA Cl. progs. 26.10.1883, 52-3. The general public were informed by notice in the papers on the following day.

3. See Ripon to Hughes 20.7.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/5, 117.

4. For memorial text see P.P. 1884, LX, 671-5.

5. For their part non-official Europeans hoped that such parliamentary consideration at the very least might delay matters till the Conservatives were returned to power and 'common-sense' again prevailed in Indian affairs. Their more sanguine members thought that the measure would be quickly squashed once Parliament and people had studied the Opinions showing the great weight against the Bill.

6. Ripon to Kimberley 6.8.-27.10.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 230-298a.

7. Kimberley to Gladstone 26.9.1883, Gladstone P. CXLIII, Add. MSS. 44228, 113.

Northbrook, Hartington and other Cabinet members too were strongly averse to any delay in proceeding.[1] Ripon however, 'too anxious to shift the responsibility for the Bill off the Government of India',[2] kept up his pleas, and thereby evoked lengthy communications between Kimberley and Gladstone on the subject.[3] It was a very disappointed Viceroy who heard on 26 October by overnight telegram from England that the Cabinet had turned down his request for postponement.[4]

Once the decision not to delay the Bill until Parliament had reassembled had been taken, the Council of India in London could take up consideration of the modifications to Ilbert's original Bill which had been suggested by the Government of India in their Despatch of 10 August. These they approved in a Despatch of 9 November, the gist of which was telegraphed to Ripon that same day.[5] Four days later at an Anchor (Liberal Society) banquet in the Colston Hall, Bristol, Northbrook, the First Lord of the Admiralty, publicly revealed the secret to an interested world that 'in deference to the feeling which has been expressed' a modified Ilbert Bill would now be brought before the Legislative Council. The new jurisdiction to be given to Indians would be restricted to District Magistrates and Sessions Judges, and a power to transfer cases from their courts would be given to the High Courts, acting at their discretion.[6] The news was at once telegraphed to India, setting off a new burst of excitement among the non-official community.

As the British Press in India took up positions on the new situation - the Englishman alone stood unequivocally for the total withdrawal of the Bill (with some mild support from the Indian Daily News) whilst the other papers inclined towards considering

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1. Kimberley to Ripon 24.8.-26.10.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 84-101.
2. Kimberley to Gladstone 12.10.1883, Gladstone P. CXLIII, 119.
3. Kimberley-Gladstone correspondence 23.9.-19.10.1883, ibid., 106-129.
4. Kimberley to Ripon telegram 25.10.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/4, 427.
5. Kimberley to Ripon 9.11.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 106a-b.
6. For reports of the speech see Times 14.11.1883, Daily Telegraph 14.11.1883.

or accepting the compromise offered[1] - the Defence Association Council in Calcutta met in emergency session on Thursday 15 November to consider the Bristol speech, reported by telegram by Lethbridge. An expression of Council opinion on the compromise seemed to be required for use by Lethbridge and it was resolved that Keswick telegraph back 'that the opinion of the united European Community in India as shown at Numerous meetings held recently was against any compromise and that no compromise was possible which would admit the vicious principle of subjecting Europeans in criminal matters to the jurisdiction of Natives'.[2] Turning to consider the opposition campaign in India in the light of the Bristol speech, the Council resolved to send telegrams to all Association branches and to all their main mofussil supporters to announce that 'a compromise is in the opinion of the Council impossible' and to request active agitation against it. It was further determined to convene another great public demonstration meeting 'at a date hereafter to be fixed' and invite all classes of the community throughout India to attend.[3] With the Bristol speech in the papers together with the Defence Council's well publicised call for renewed opposition, protest meetings were held at Silchar, Purneah and Monghyr, the first three of twenty two such meetings to be held in November or of some thirty four all told in the period up to 21 December. As before Assam and Bengal led the movement, Bombay as usual was aloof - far from showing support a Chamber of Commerce meeting there on 19 December renewed its criticism of the anti-Native language used in the campaign - and the other main regions fell

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1. The young Rudyard Kipling, assistant to the editor of the Civil and Military Gazette, was hissed in the Punjab Club at Lahore when his paper, which had at first opposed the Bill, decided to withdraw from active opposition on the news of the proposed modification. See C. Carrington, Rudyard Kipling His Life and Work, 86.

2. EAIDA Cl. progs. 15.11.1883, 59. The same Minutes note that the Association's funds had then reached Rs. 150,000. A parallel Working Men's Defence Fund was also in operation.

3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 15.11.1883, 59, 60. These Minutes mention an approach to the Defence Association from Ripon via Rivers Thompson stating that the Viceroy would postpone the Bill till April if the Association would pledge itself to raise the question in Parliament before Easter. The EAIDA however refused to give such a pledge.

somewhere in between.[1] But with Ripon's return to Calcutta it was there that the excitement and tension mounted most steadily as November drew to a close.[2]

In Britain a second phase of the opposition movement had begun with Atkins's arrival on the scene on 1 October. As he started on his speaking campaign Macgregor's telegram in the Times on the 9th gave the news of the Calcutta Defence Council's five resolutions, and on the 10th the Anglo-Indian Association (London Committee) met, resolved to support the Defence Association's latest policy line, and to present a second memorial to the Secretary of State praying him to postpone any Ilbert Bill decision till the Commons should have considered the matter.[3]

Atkins's opening address to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales on 5 October was a failure, for despite his attempts at a high tea the day before to demonstrate how close the problems of India's railwaymen were to those of railwaymen in Britain, the conference passed a pro-Bill resolution.[4] Undaunted, however, he travelled about Britain speaking for the anti-Bill platform and achieved notable success, with some support from Branson and others, and helped no doubt by the publication of two further weighty letters from Fitzjames Stephen which appeared in the Times of 2 and 9 November. By the end of the third week of November Atkins had spoken at thirteen well reported meetings, including those at Exeter on 19 October, at Westminster on the 26th and at Newport,

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1. The Englishman extensively reported these anti-Bill meetings in the contest's third phase. Notable among the later meetings held were those at Allahabad on 28 November, and at Lahore and Silchar (a further meeting) on 1 and 15 December. Comments made at the Allahabad meeting interestingly show that the town's non-officials by then were split into two wings, namely those who were still active opponents of the Bill and those who were unconcerned.

2. See reports to Ripon by Executive Council members on the state of Calcutta feeling from Gibbs, 18.11.1883, Bayley, 20.11.1883, and Ilbert 23.11.1883, in Ind.[MPD] BP7/6, 150b-155.

3. London correspondent's report in Englishman 3.11.1883. To publicise its viewpoint further the London Committee had by early October issued an anthology of objections voiced to the Bill. The Bill postponement request was conveyed in a London Committee letter to Kimberley on 7 November - its seven signatories included Arbuthnot, Bullen-Smith, Lethbridge, Maclean and Seton-Karr, and was turned down in the India Office reply of 27 November. (See P.P. 1884, LX, 724-6).

4. For reports of the conference see Scotsman, 3.10.-6.10.1883. It was 'sore discouragement' said this paper.

Preston and Hackney on 9, 19 and 20 November. With such publicity the Bill now came in for much party political comment in England and was discussed in the political clubs and featured in the public addresses of prominent politicians.[1] Kimberley invited Atkins to meet him on 21 November - a serious tactical error - and Atkins's report, though denied by Kimberley, that the Secretary of State had said that 'the English Government had nothing to do with the Bill', set off yet another scandal which was made the most of by the Bill's opponents when the news was telegraphed to India.[2] There the coldness with which a toast to the unfortunate Ripon was received at Calcutta's St. Andrew's dinner on 30 November[3] made plain how isolated the Viceroy had become.

The return of Ripon to Calcutta on 1 December marked by the boos, groans and hisses of the European non-officials[4] heralded the start of a month within which the Bill it seemed would surely have to be decided one way or the other. News from England of Sir Bartle Frere's powerful condemnation of the measure in the Times of the 3rd, scarcely offset by the pro-Bill letters of George Foggo and W.W. Hunter on the 5th and 10th, and of Hartington's speech at Accrington on the 1st revealing details of Maine's undelivered warning in 1882,[5] added further fuel to the flames of a Calcutta now fully ablaze.[6] The Duke of Connaught

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1. See Times, Morning Post and Allen's Indian Mail, October and November 1883. Audiences of 2,000 or more were noted at a number of the meetings.

2. Times 23.11.-30.11.1883, Englishman 24.11.-30.11.1883, and Kimberley to Ripon 28.11.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 113-4. In the midst of this scandal the Defence Association's London Committee, reacting to Keswick's mid-November telegram of 'no compromise', held a counterpart Committee Meeting at Limmer's Hotel on 23 November and passed resolutions indicating the unacceptability of a compromise. (The proceedings of the meeting appear in Englishman, European News Summary 22.12.1883). This meeting marked the start of the third phase of the anti-Bill movement in Britain.

3. Englishman, 3.12.1883.

4. The hostile reception was well noted in the reports in the papers.

5. Englishman, 5.12.1883.

6. Frere had been Governor of Bombay in the 1860's; Foggo was now Honorary Secretary of the Indian Reform Association which had recently sprung out of the British India Committee; Hunter was Director General of Statistics in India and a member of the Viceroy's Legislative Council.

who arrived with the Duchess in Calcutta on the 3rd gave Ripon little help. Disturbed at having been brought down to Calcutta as a kind of shield against the storm, the Duke was inclined to stand aloof from the unpopular Viceroy, 'the greatest fool in Asia' as he later unkindly called him.[1] Yet booed, shunned, attacked Ripon maintained his silence. High purposed, industrious, painstaking, honest and shrewd he might have seemed to his biographer, and a new incarnation to Indians,[2] but to the non-official British he was above all exasperatingly silent.

It was not until the Legislative Council meeting on 7 December, six days after he had received the India Office Despatch on the Ilbert Bill, that Ripon felt 'free to speak' and to explain his silence upon the course of discussions to that date. Since there were two Executive Council members not yet in Calcutta he could, however, give no indication of how the mode of proceeding with the Bill would be determined.[3]

The non-official British were furious. Keswick on the 12th complained bitterly that 'the Viceroy's Statement of Friday the 7th had not made any one much the wiser', but with his EAIDA Council colleagues resignedly admitted 'that although many enquiries had been made as to the future action of the Association it was undesirable to commit themselves until the Government had spoken out'.[4] All that they could do was to resolve to defer the great new public meeting that had been planned until after the Legislative Council meeting on the 14th, to agree themselves to sit 'de die in diem' until Government's plans became known, and meanwhile to publish both in India and in England the joint opinion of the lawyers Pitt Kennedy and Pugh[5] that the Legislative Council

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1. Lyall to Webb 4.12. and 18.12.1883, Lyall C. MSS.Eur.F. 132/9,-, and Primrose to Godley 14.4.1884, Kilbracken C. MSS.Eur. F.102/26, 13.

2. Wolf I, v, and W.S. Blunt, India Under Ripon, 37.

3. Leg. Cl. progs. 1883, XXII, 611-17.

4. EAIDA Cl. progs. 12.12.1883, 65.

5. Pugh the barrister M.P. spent his winters in legal practice in India 'much to the disgust of the regular Calcutta lawyers' and where his clients were 'to be found largely ... among Indigo Planters and other Europeans in the mofussil', see Ripon to Kimberley 4.3.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 72.

would be acting ultra vires if it passed the Bill.[1] If the Association could not act, the cast of the political skit 'A Glance in Advance; or, What's in Store for '84' did,[2] playing all that week to crowded houses which, as the young Bengal Civilian H.M. Kisch wrote to his mother, cheered every word that told against the supporters of the Bill again and again.[3]

With every passing day Calcutta filled up with out of town visitors coming in for the trade exhibition[4] and for Christmas. The Behar Mounted Volunteers were also down in Calcutta for their conveniently arranged winter manouevres, the very same men who in their civilian role as indigo planters had been the bitterest and most intense opponents of the Ilbert Bill. (Bitterest male opponents that is, for as Gibbs noted the female was 'far more unreasonable and active in opposition than the male', a comment with which Ripon ruefully agreed - 'the ladies are, as is often the case, hotter than the men').[5] It was obviously very desirable

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 12.12.1883, 65. The resolutions were to be published 'as an answer to the numerous enquiries which the Association is daily receiving as to its future action'.

2. See notices and reviews in Englishman 28., 30.11. and 12., 15.12.1883.

3. Letter 18.12.1883 in Kisch C. MSS.Eur.B.155, 1620. Kisch mentions - a telling point - that the play was written by a judge in India.

4. Kisch, returning to India, had met Britons and Australians coming for the Exhibition, see Kisch C. MSS.Eur.B.155, 1601-7.

5. Gibbs to Ripon 18.11.1883 and Ripon to Kimberley 2.12.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/6, 150b and ibid. BP7/3, 305.

to use the presence of the Volunteers in Calcutta,[1] and the Defence Association Council accordingly decided to book the Town Hall for New Year's Eve for their monster protest meeting.[2]

Meanwhile with Stewart and Wilson now back in the capital, Ripon was deliberating with his full Executive Council about the next moves. A suggestion of Home Department Secretary A. Mackenzie, backed up strongly by G.H.P. Evans, recommended that a European British subject brought before a Native magistrate on a criminal charge should have the right of claiming the transfer of his case to a European magistrate. (Somewhat similar schemes were put forward by Knight the editor of the Statesman and Lambert the Deputy Police Commissioner). This scheme was considered by the Executive Council on 13 December but rejected as a surrender of the Bill's principle. Instead the idea put forward by Colvin, Finance Member in succession to Baring, of mixed magistrates benches and mixed juries in sessions cases for mofussil criminal trials where European British subjects were involved, was seized upon.[3] Three of the Executive Council,

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1. They themselves as the Indian Mirror on 11.10.1884, and the Englishman in an expanded version on 23.3.1886 later reported, planned to celebrate their being there by kidnapping Lord Ripon and deporting him to 'some beautiful port in New Zealand, or Java, or Japan or Jupiter'. The Englishman report, given in Appendix IV, is closer to the event in question than the accounts given in 1902 by C.E. Buckland, Bengal under the Lieutenant-Governors, II, 787-8, and in 1911 by Sir Henry Cotton in Indian and Home Memories, 179-80. Dufferin, Ripon's successor, mentions the kidnap attempt in a letter to Secretary of State Cross 27.9.1886, (Dufferin C. MSS.Eur.F.130/5, 125), believing the Bengal tea planters to be the culprits, (some tea planters in fact were in the Behar Volunteers), whilst in W.N.R. Kemp, History of the Behar Light Horse, 230, mention is made of the story still being related in 1947, the final year of the regiment's existence. This version, however, sixty years after the event, gives Rivers Thompson as the intended victim! During the course of 1883 a call had also been made at times to cut off India from England and govern it as a non-official British run State, see Englishman 16-22.10.1883.

2. EAIDA Cl. progs. 19.12.1883, 69-70. Ilbert to Godley 3.12.1883, Kilbracken C. MSS.Eur.F.102/30, 10, mentions free railway fares being offered to mofussil planters for this meeting.

3. Both Colvin and Gibbs, who were not present at the time, were free to dissent from the 10 August Despatch. The idea raised by Colvin was not new, having been put forward eight months previously in a 2 April letter of Fergusson the Bombay Governor to Ripon, see Ind.[MPD] BP7/6, 199.

Bayley, Gibbs and Wilson, were showing clear signs of being scared by the fierce antagonism of the opposition movement, with Bayley the Revenue and Agricultural Member the most panicky of all. These members especially were ready to embrace any way out of the present dangerous situation whilst yet retaining a shred of dignity. The opening afforded by the Evans-Mackenzie suggestion was therefore seized on and Colvin was deputed to go back to Evans with the mixed benches and juries idea and see if the Ilbert Bill opposition would accept that.[1] The response was favourable and at the next Executive Council meeting on the 15th a majority proposed acceptance of the twin modifications to the Bill. Ripon, however, though for mixed juries was against mixed benches and telegraphed Kimberley for support. When Kimberley gave the required support the Council dropped the mixed benches proposal, on 20 December, and authorised Colvin to continue contacts with Evans on the basis of mixed juries alone. 'Long and difficult negotiations with Evans' followed.

In the course of these Evans mastered Colvin in tactics by suddenly informing him through the panicky Bayley that he would be leaving Calcutta on 21 December and not returning till 3 January. He had a strong hand. With a new Town Hall meeting in the offing, and with tempers on both the European and Indian sides rising, a collision, made more dangerous by the paucity of the European police in Calcutta,[2] seemed likely unless agreement was reached.[3] On 21 December Evans explained to the Defence Association Council that he had rejected the Government's proposals to increase sessions judges' powers, but argued that the compromise terms now offered by Government were the best which could be obtained. The proposals were a final offer on behalf of the Government he emphasised, and the right given to European British subjects brought before District Magistrates or Sessions

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1. Colvin to Godley 23.12.1883, Kilbracken C. MSS.Eur.F.102/31, 12. Evans was not a member of the Defence Association.

2. Ripon reported to Kimberley on 8 December that the European police in Calcutta numbered between 60 and 70 men.

3. These behind the scene developments are discussed at length in correspondence to and from Ripon and to and from Colvin in the period 3 to 23 December 1883 given in Ind.[MPD] BP7/3 and BP7/6, and in Kilbracken C. MSS.Eur.F.102/31; Knight's views were put forward in the Statesman at this time. See also Gopal, 155-160.

Judges to claim trial by a (mixed) jury under section 451 of the Criminal Procedure Code was an important concession. Influenced by Evans's recommendation, the Defence Association Council unanimously decided to accept the terms of the Concordat offered by Government. They had indeed won a great victory and the Council magnanimously called off the 31 December meeting and 'by special request' stopped the performances of 'A Glance in Advance ...'.[1]

In the days following the Concordat, Ripon, who had obtained the prior agreement of a reluctantly acquiescing Kimberley to its main line,[2] defensively endeavoured to show both that the principle of the Bill had been maintained and that he had been let down by the Legislative Council. In personally drafted memoranda and letters to Kimberley, Gladstone and A.O. Hume he was at pains to stress that the racial bar had now been removed from the judicial system. But in so doing he chose to ignore not only Ilbert's stated opinion that mixed juries were a travesty of justice,[3] but his own earlier judgment that to confine the extended judicial powers 'only to Native District Magistrates and Sessions Judges' would 'be a practical sham'.[4] And for the debacle Ripon really had only himself to blame, for when Ilbert and Hope the Home Department Member showed themselves ready to stand against mixed juries, it was Ripon who allowed himself to be swayed by the panic of his other Council members. 'Between ourselves', wrote Kimberley to his Permanent Under Secretary Godley, 'I think that if he had throughout assumed a firmer tone, the Council would have been firmer too'.[5] Primrose, the Viceroy's Private Secretary, also felt that 'the Govt. here is making too much of the agitation, and is too ready to make further concessions' but despite many arguments with Ripon he could not persuade

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 21.12.1883, 70-74. For text of the Concordat, which allowed an increase in district magistrates' powers, see enclosure in Ripon to Kimberley 22.12.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 315. Under section 451 of the Code not less than half the members of the jury were to be Europeans and/or Americans.

2. Kimberley to Ripon 27.12.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 118b.

3. See point 57 of Ilbert Note 25.7.1883 in Ripon P. XCIII, 74.

4. In his 8 September 1882 letter here to Hartington Ripon had emphasised that District Magistrates had too much administrative and appelate work to try original cases.

5. Kimberley to Godley 28.12.1883, Kilbracken C. MSS.Eur.F. 102/3A, 93.

him to stand firm.[1] Mrs Ilbert, very embittered, spoke of a weak Viceroy following a frightened (Executive) Council and abandoning her broken-hearted husband.[2] One may doubt whether when the peaceloving Ripon,[3] declared 'I did ... the best that I could under very difficult circumstances',[4] even he believed that to be true.

Since 14 December the Viceroy had renewed an intermittent correspondence with A.O. Hume the recently retired Civil Servant,[5] then in Simla, who acted for him as a listening post and adviser on the Indian point of view. Hume's call to Indian graduates of Calcutta University to organise and work for native rights[6] had been made on the morrow of the February Town Hall meeting and his letter in the Daily News of 14 May identifying the Bill as a test case for Indians had been studied with interest by Gladstone and Kimberley and had added, it seemed, to their determination to push the Bill through.[7] A disappointed Hume had now to put the best face possible on the Concordat and arguing that Lord Ripon had done his best on their behalf tactfully to smooth Indian feelings.[8] In Calcutta the Viceroy used Ilbert to explain and justify the Concordat to such Indians as Legislative Council members Kristodas Pal and Amir Ali. From Bombay the native leaders the lawyer Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik and the editor of the Indian Spectator Behramji M. Malabar,

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1. Primrose to Godley 18.12.1883, Kilbracken C. F.102/26, 4, 5.
2. Blunt, 96-7.
3. Ripon to Kimberley 6.8.1883, Ind.[MPD] BP7/3, 230.
4. Ripon to John Bright 11.3.1884, ibid. BP7/5, 19.
5. For some account of Hume's civil service career and achievements see W. Wedderburn, Allan Octavian Hume, C.B., 6-38, 46.
6. See ibid., 50-53.
7. Kimberley to Gladstone 23.5.1883, Gladstone P. CXLIII, 73-5.
8. Hume to Ripon 25.12.1883, 14.1.1884, Ind.[MPD] BP7/6, 193-4b and 24j-26.

telegrammed their continued confidence in the Viceroy.[1] Ripon's secret weapon here was to stress that he would feel obliged to resign if the Indians did not acquiesce in the Concordat.[2] In February Indians had given grateful welcome to the Government for introducing the measure, they had gone on to deprecation of the Town Hall and similar meetings, conjoined with a belief that such demonstrations would have no effect on Government deliberations.[3] However the often violently racialist sentiments openly expressed by the Europeans and the issue in the contempt case martyrdom of Surendranath Banerjea - 'Who is the greater man of the two, Lord Ripon or Justice Norris?' queried the Dacca Prakash on 13 May[4] - caused Indians both to study the 'test question' with closer interest and to press a counter-agitation too. The Indian meetings and memorials in favour of the Ilbert Bill had been renewed in the closing months of the struggle with requests for the Government to stand firm against the non-official British.[5] The Concordat was proof that they had not done so and native disappointment was bitter.[6] So much for the race equality of the 1833 Charter and the Queen's Proclamation: 'We have been disenchanted', wrote the Bengalee.[7] The climax of the whole struggle had taken place before the eyes of Indians assembled in Calcutta at the end of December for a first National Conference.

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1. Ripon to Ilbert 22.12. and 26.12.1883, and to Mandlik 25.12.1883, BP7/6 102-110; telegrams 25.12.1883 from Mandlik and Malabari to Primrose, Ilbert C. MSS.Eur.D.594/12, 29, 30. For some views on the attitudes of liberal Muslim and zamindar class representatives to the Bill see K.K. Aziz, Ameer Ali His Life and Work, N.N. Gose, Kristo Das Pal: A Study and Blunt, 94-113. For Muslim reactions in general to the measure see Zafar ul Islam and J.M. Woldman, 'Indian Muslims and the Ilbert Bill: 1883-1884', in Journal of the Asiatic Society of Pakistan, December 1963, VIII No.2, 131-56.

2. H. Mody, Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, 77.

3. Bengal Native Newspaper Reports week ending 10.3.1883, L/R/5/9, 97-99, quoting Sangbad Prabhakara and Prabhati.

4. Reports ibid., week ending 19.5.1883, 219.

5. See P.P. 1884, LX, [C.-3952.], 733ff.

6. Bengal Native Newspaper Reports, week ending 29.12.1883, ibid. Bombay ... and Madras ... Reports month of December 1883, L/R/5/9, 104, 138. For a detailed study of the views and reactions of the Indian Press to the Ilbert Bill and its surrounding agitation see Hirschmann.

7. Bengalee, 29.12.1883.

They used the occasion, and more particularly that of their great Town Hall meeting in Calcutta on 14 January 1884 to voice their grievous disappointment and to draw the appropriate conclusions for the future.[1]

The Defence Association's first great battle was over now, bar the shouting. In Britain - where in the third phase of the campaign there Atkins and Branson had been engaged on a new round of well attended public meetings before being called off - the Concordat was greeted with expressions varying from deep dissatisfaction amongst Government supporters to great joy amongst the Anglo-Indians, though the general tone of the papers was one of relief at the settlement which allowed further campaigning to cease.[2] In India too the Concordat was greeted in the main with pleasure and relief. Five protest meetings from the die-hard, 'swaggering, beer-drinking, cigar-smoking' tea planters of North Bengal and Assam[3] had, it was true, rejected the precipitately agreed Concordat, but the Englishman intimated that their worries were uncalled for and that they could have full confidence in the success which the Defence Association Council had achieved.[4]

That success had, indeed, been very complete for the original Concordat, which it had been intended to introduce at the Legislative Council meeting on 4 January, had been modified still further in favour of the Europeans. On his return to Calcutta Evans had set off a new crisis by taking a hard line about cases coming before Indian District Magistrates where mixed juries, though claimed, could not be assembled. The Government envisaged the transfer of such cases to a sessions judge, but Evans objected, principally it seemed because a sessions judge's powers of

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1. See reports of the Conference and Town Hall meeting in both the Calcutta European and Indian Press at the time and S. Banerjea, A Nation in Making, 85-6.

2. London Press end of December 1883, Kimberley's letters to Ripon 27.12.1883-17.1.1884 and Englishman 25.12.1883, 22 and 28.1.1884. Among campaign action of the London Committee in hand had been that of addresses by James Wilson and other prominent Committee members at ten meetings arranged across Britain, see Englishman 7.12.1883.

3. Primrose to Godley 1.1.1884 Kilbracken C. MSS.Eur.F.102/26, 7.

4. Englishman 23.1.1884. The meetings in question were those held at or near Kurseong, Silchar, Sibsagar, Sylhet and Mertinga (Matiganj?).

punishment were greater than those of a district magistrate.[1] The Legislative Council meeting accordingly adjourned and Evans squeezed a further concession from Colvin acting for the Government.[2] This was put before the Defence Association Council which agreed it by majority vote on Saturday the 5th. A deputation led by A.B. Miller then met Rivers Thompson, their greatest supporter in Government circles, about noon that day, and clarified the latest Defence Association stance prior to the Legislative Council meeting on the Monday.[3] On the 6th Colvin gave Government approval to the latest concession, a further crisis was thus averted,[4] and the Bill was thereupon referred to a Select Committee at the adjourned Legislative Council on the 7th.[5] With merely minor amendments in Select Committee the Ilbert Bill came back to the Legislative Council on the 18th and was duly passed into law seven days later as Act III of 1884.[6] Meeting the same day, 25 January 1884, a highly satisfied Defence Association Council voted an honorarium of £200 to Lethbridge and a bonus of £100 to Atkins who was requested to remain in England working on the EAIDA's behalf till after May 1st when the new Act was to come into operation. Atkins, whose star had risen high since the meeting with Kimberley, was moreover to be asked to organise with Lethbridge a permanent branch of the Association in England.[7]

In the ten months since March 1883 the Defence Association membership had grown steadily,[8] and a great non-official British victory had been won. Whether the leadership role assumed by the

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1. Colvin to Ripon 3.1.1884, Ind.[MPD] BP7/6, 4d.

2. The transfer in such cases to go to a sessions judge who would however only act with the powers of a district magistrate.

3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 5.1.1884, 75-77.

4. Ibid. mentions that the holding of a mass meeting had been contemplated for Sunday afternoon 6 January at Wilson's Circus.

5. At this meeting H.S. Thomas the Madras official had, to Ripon's annoyance, done his utmost to stir up the bitterness of a controversy which was fast approaching a settlement. The Defence Association Council by contrast thought his endeavours 'high-minded'.

6. See Leg. Cl. progs. 1884, XXIII, 3-71, 75-84 and P.P. 1884, LX 833-5, 847-9.

7. EAIDA Cl. progs. 25.1.1884, 79, 80.

8. To 1,110 at 31.12.1883 and 1,137 at 25.1.1884.

Association could be sustained in less eventful years remained, however, to be seen. And what of the Indians - the Natives so firmly put in their place in 1883 and 1884? The thoughtful and foresighted Lyall summed up their position very well: 'The consequences of all this turmoil', he wrote,[1] 'will be felt later; the new wine has got into the old bottles, and will ferment gradually'.

1. Lyall to Webb 8.1.1884, Lyall C. MSS.Eur.F.132/9,-.

CHAPTER III

THE YEARS OF WATCHFULNESS

On Saturday 13 December 1884, Lord Dufferin, who succeeded Ripon as Viceroy and Governor-General of India, was sworn in at Calcutta. The unimposing swearing-in ceremony, the address from 'such a funny little throne with no back' and the 'big official dinner' in the evening were all duly noted by the new Viceroy's wife who never knew that weekend whether it was she or Lady Ripon who was the lady of Government House. By early Monday however the Ripons had departed and the new Vicereine could turn single-mindedly to problems of furnishing.[1] Dufferin himself, as became a man who had come so far from his 'young promising Liberal' days - he had been Under Secretary for India in the 'sixties, Governor-General of Canada in the 'seventies and latterly British Ambassador at St. Petersburg and Constantinople -,[2] for his part was by then already deeply immersed in official business. The Bengal Tenancy Bill was the most important measure left over from Ripon's regime and, having made himself thoroughly acquainted with the measure on the boat journey out he prepared 'to carry through the ... Bill this Session in one shape or another'. By March 1885 he would have duly pushed the measure through,[3] with Acts of a similar nature for Oudh and the Punjab to follow later in his administration.[4]

But the new Governor-General, though plunged at once into administration, was also careful to cultivate good public relations, taking careful note of his predecessor's successes and failures in that field. Of the deep affection of Indian feeling for Ripon he was well aware - 'no Viceroy probably has ever left India amidst such general and genuine expressions of good-will on

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1. Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, Our Viceregal Life in India, I, 12, 13.

2. C.E.D. Black, The Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, chaps. I-IX, and Viscount Mersey, The Viceroys and Governors-General of India 1757-1947, 101-3.

3. For a review of the main features of the reshaped Bill see Philips et al., 633-6.

4. Black, 216-7, A. Lyall, The Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, 76-84, and Dufferin to Kimberley 15.12.1884, Dufferin C. MSS.Eur.F.130/2, 2.

the part of the Indian population'[1] - and he made a point to Kimberley of his determination to stress to Indians that he proposed to continue in Ripon's footsteps and to foster the latter's scheme of Local Self-Government.[2] He even took up the study of Persian in the hope that this would help him in his personal contacts with upper-class Indians.[3] As for the non-official British community, who showed by contrast so little regret at Ripon's departure[4] and who were irritated by the 'liberal ring' of his public speeches and policy generally, Dufferin felt that with them a policy of appeasement would be wise. 'I have no doubt' he wrote[5] 'that the British Colony will be very glad of the opportunity I propose to offer them of making their peace with Government House. It must have cost them a good deal to maintain the offensive attitude they assumed towards Ripon'. After all, he reasoned, the non-official British men were 'at heart, like the rest of their countrymen, reasonable and good-natured' whilst 'their wives and daughters will want to dance and to show off their new frocks'.[6]

The success of his friendly and appeasing policies towards Indians and the non-official British respectively[7] was quickly reflected in Dufferin's first levée, at which attendance was 'greater than has been known at Calcutta for the last 10 or 15 years' and in the 'drawing room' which followed shortly after, where, as Lady Dufferin amusedly noted, numbers of the women were

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1. Dufferin C. MSS.Eur.F.130/2, 1.

2. Ibid.

3. Black, 307-8, Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, I, 169, II, 213.

4. Macgregor cable in Times 15.12.1884.

5. Dufferin to Kimberley 15.12.1884, Dufferin C. MSS.Eur.F.130/2, 1, 2.

6. A later Viceroy, showing similar consideration for memsahib feelings, planned to arrive back in Calcutta from Simla for the winter season 'in time for the ladies to get their Drawing Room gowns'. See Elgin to Lord George Hamilton (Secretary of State) 4.11.1897, Elgin P. MSS.Eur.F.84/15, 165.

7. In the eyes of one such Briton in India, Dufferin, amongst the Viceroys of the late nineteenth century, stood second in popularity only to Mayo. See H. Massey, Recollections of Calcutta for over half a Century, 16, 19.

attired even more fashionably than herself, the Vicereine![1] So with the passing of the year 1884, the Anglo-Indian community relaxed.[2]

Having laid stress in his first letter as Viceroy to the Secretary of State upon the olive branch he was extending to the non-official British, (and through them to the European community at large), and reported its ready acceptance, Dufferin thereafter was able in his regular personal letters to his India Office master largely to ignore the European community's activities.[3] In marked contrast with Ripon's experience, Dufferin was to find the Defence Association no problem to handle at all.

This quiescence followed from the absence of any issue large and universal enough to excite widespread active support from the non-official community. There had been, as noted, a number of issues in Ripon's day, other than the Ilbert Bill, which had excited sectional interest but none emotive enough to have a universal appeal. For example, there had been the Roorkee Resolutions of 1882 and 1883. Under these Ripon's Government had chosen to interpret the Home Government's orders which guaranteed employment in the Public Works Department for successful students at the Roorkee and other Indian Engineering Colleges, in a manner preferential to Indians as against domiciled Europeans and Eurasians. By an extension of such policy in 1883 the son of the domiciled C.R. Kiernander[4] was refused entry to the Dehra Dun Forestry School. The Defence Association, preoccupied with the Ilbert Bill, passed the problem over to the Eurasian Association for consideration.[5] But when, having secured its Concordat victory, the Association did take up the Kiernander case again in 1884 it showed little stomach for a fight. Having first declared its readiness to remonstrate and agitate on a matter of such 'mischievous mis-interpretation of the policy and intentions of

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1. Dufferin to Kimberley 23.12.1884, Dufferin C. MSS.Eur.F. 130/2, 4, and Marchioness of Dufferin ..., I, 17-22.

2. B. Martin Jr., New India 1885, 25.

3. See Dufferin C. MSS.Eur.F.130/2;/5;/8;/11.

4. The boy was a descendent of the first Protestant missionary in Bengal, - a further cause of irritation.

5. EAIDA Cl. progs. 10.9.1883, 35.

the Parliament and people of England'[1] and having supported protest meetings in the autumn of 1884, the EAIDA Council then decided to suspend action pending Dufferin's assumption of office and the result of a Government of India despatch recommending the rescinding of the Roorkee Resolutions. After all, the Council declared, 'it was not the object of the Association to become aggressive or embarrass the Government needlessly'. The withdrawal of the Resolutions shortly thereafter was acclaimed as a justification of the Association's policy of avoiding provocative action.[2] However, further correspondence with the Bengal and Indian Governments in 1885 and 1886 about the denial to Europeans of employment in the Civil Service proved unavailing, and even the setting up of the Public Service Commission in 1886, which threatened to give the ill-qualified Indian a preference over better qualified Europeans - a most 'unjust idea' - did not call forth any strong action from the Association.[3] Indeed it seemed that the more vigorously Indian associations stirred into activity, the more sluggishly the Association responded, withdrawing into hibernation in its shell.

Thus in 1885 the Defence Association Council presented members with a report notable as 'a record of watchfulness rather than of action'. As this second annual report explained, 'with the dying out of the great controversy which called the Association into existence the work to be done by us has necessarily assumed a new form'. This comprised 'ascertaining the points where the European Community may be at a disadvantage, and where it may be requisite that their interests should be conserved and protected, or their just claims and fair demands for consideration brought to the notice of Government'. Whilst performing that duty, the Report frankly admitted, the Association's labours 'may not have that attractive and perhaps exciting form which

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1. The allusion was to the Charter Act of 1833, (Section LXXXVII), and Queen's Proclamation of 1858, under which the rights of Natives of India to employment under the Company and then the Crown, in accordance with their qualifications, was duly acknowledged.

2. EAIDA Report [1884], 6-7, 17.

3. EAIDA Report [1885], 4, 5, 36-48, ibid. 1886, 7-9, and see discussion on this Commission in chapter V below.

marked the work recorded in its first Report'.[1] As its President Keswick stressed at the second annual general meeting on 11 February 1886,[2] the Association had always to be watchful, its motto "Nunquam Dormio".[3] But the pressures to be exerted would be informal persuasion and argument, not organised confrontation.

Not only was the role of the Association altering, so was its leadership. Keswick, the highly popular senior partner in Jardine, Skinner, & Co.[4] and recognised 'King' of the European community in Calcutta, who had been the EAIDA's President continuously from its foundation, was now leaving for England after nineteen years residence in India. Keswick of course was identified with the Ilbert Bill victory and whilst no direct mention of his part therein was made at his farewell public dinner, the loud cheers and prolonged applause which greeted the reading out at the dinner of telegrams from the Behar Mounted Rifles and the Cachar planters served the purpose just as well.[5] His successors, though able in their own right, markedly lacked the glamour which victory had given to Keswick, and as it happened both L.P.D. Broughton and D. Cruickshank who followed him[6] held office only for a few months apiece before going to England on leave.[7] Sir Alexander Wilson, another Jardine, Skinner, & Co. partner, did then serve for a longer period, from late 1886 (or early 1887) to June 1889, but Cruickshank's second spell in office was only for a year 1889-90, though Broughton who succeeded him held the post for a two year term from February 1890 to April 1892. Broughton, Cruickshank and Wilson had all held the office of Vice President prior to becoming President and in the case of

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1. EAIDA Report [1885], 1. Much of the first [1884] Report of course had been devoted to the events of the Ilbert Bill struggle.

2. See report of meeting in Englishman, 12.2.1886.

3. Nunquam dormio: I never sleep.

4. Massey, 21, mentions that this was at the time the premier firm in Calcutta.

5. Englishman 11.2.1886, report of farewell dinner to Keswick held in the Calcutta Town Hall.

6. Broughton was a barrister-at-law (and in official ranks as well as Administrator-General of Bengal), and Cruickshank, as recalled, a Begg, Dunlop & Co. partner.

7. Reports of 2nd and 3rd annual meetings of the Association in Englishman 12.2.1886, 5.5.1887.

Broughton and Cruickshank were to do so again before assuming the presidency a second time - a factor which added to their authority in dealing with Association affairs - whilst the other six Vice Presidents of the period were likewise drawn from the ranks of the Calcutta agency houses or the Bar, in a two to one ratio.[1] The agency houses represented comprised those with large mofussil interests, in tea and indigo for example, who had been put on guard by their Ilbert Bill experience, together with those with important shipping interests. As for the lawyers it was probably personal self-interest as much as anything which prompted them to play dominant roles in the Defence Association. The senior office holders thus brought wide experience of the business world and of the Association's own workings to the Council - although the two to an extent were in opposition, the very range of business affairs - and of interests in other associations - which gave them weight in the EAIDA Council precluding them from giving much time to its affairs. The President Cruickshank thus was 'unable to take the chair' at the 1892 annual meeting as he was 'likely to be detained elsewhere for a considerable time'.[2]

There had also been change in the secretaryship of the Defence Association. With the departure for England of the dynamic editor of the Englishman, Furrell, towards the end of 1883,[3] the less active of the first two Honorary Secretaries, S.E.J. Clarke, was left to carry on during 1884 and 1885.[4] From February 1886 W.C. Madge then took over as Honorary Secretary[5]

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1. EAIDA Reports 1886-1891, Englishman 28.2.1890, 13.3.1891, 29.4.1892. The Vice Presidents had been: 1883 and 1884/5 R. Miller (Hoare, Miller & Co.) and A.B. Miller (barrister), 1885/6 R. Miller and Broughton, 1886/7 Cruickshank and H.B.H. Turner (Turner, Harrison & Co.) and then Wilson in place of Turner from March 1886, 1887/8 Cruickshank and R. Allen (barrister), 1888/9 and 1889/90 Broughton and A.G. Watson (Williamson, Magor & Co.), 1890/1 Turner and J.L. Mackay (Mackinnon, Mackenzie & Co.), 1891/92 Mackay and A.B. Miller. The lawyer Miller was another who, like Broughton, held official rank, being (for example in 1891) Official Trustee.

2. Englishman, 29.4.1892.

3. J.O.B. Saunders, the paper's owner, took Furrell's place on the Council.

4. EAIDA Reports [1884], [1885].

5. EAIDA Cl. progs. 28.1.1886, 25.2.1886, Clarke had just become Secretary of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

until on 27 October 1887 he was appointed paid Secretary of the Defence Association retroactively from 1 August on a monthly allowance of 250 rupees. The change did not, however, imply a more active or professional approach, for the appointment Minute stated that it was to be 'understood that the Secretary should not be tied down to particular hours of attendance, but should attend regularly every day, and give the office sufficient time for the regular discharge of its duties'.[1] Madge, who had been Secretary of the Eurasian Association in Calcutta for the past seven years, and latterly had acted as Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of that body, had stepped up in the world - relinquishing his Eurasian Association posts in the process - and was to hang on to the secretaryship of the Defence Association till the year 1909/10, serving thereafter as the Association's Honorary Secretary again till April 1912 when he resigned.[2] Active in public work elsewhere[3] and primarily interested in domiciled Anglo-Indian and Eurasian affairs,[4] Madge was never whole-hearted in his Defence Association commitments - as his throwing up of the secretaryship[5] to take up the post of President of the (Eurasian and) Anglo-Indian Association in 1911 revealed.[6] The change of office marked another step up in his career which was to take him to the Indian Legislative Council as the Eurasian community representative.[7] While the Indian National Congress in its early years benefitted from the active leadership and advice of men such as A.O. Hume,[8] the Defence Association had to make do,

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1. The appointment was made on the resignation of the Association's Secretary, C.J. Gray, a pensioner. See EAIDA Cl. progs. 27.10.1887, 244-5, and Thacker's 1886, 1181.

2. EAIDA Reports 1886-1912.

3. Calcutta Commissioners progs. 1883 showed him as a Town Commissioner, and Madge also served as an Honorary Magistrate.

4. 'The problem of the hour' for him in 1885 was the recruitment of Anglo-Indian and Eurasian regiments, as a public lecture of his stressed. He was also probably involved in the running of the weekly Calcutta newspaper The Anglo-Indian which commenced publication in 1886.

5. He was however still to receive his previous emoluments as long as he remained a member of the Defence Association. See EDA Report 1912, 4.

6. Englishman supplement 1.1.1912. The words 'Eurasian and' had been dropped some years previously from this Association's title.

7. Madge first took his seat in this Council on 25 January 1910, see Leg. Cl. progs. XLVIII, 46.

8. See Wedderburn, 47-106.

and for a quarter of a century at that, with a Secretary whose main concern was with the domiciled and Eurasian communities, and who worked part-time, at his own convenience, providing not leadership but the routine support of an office manager. With the leaders of the British non-officials in Calcutta preoccupied with various business and civic activities, Madge's long term as Secretary was a further contributory factor, and a major one, to the malaise of the EAIDA in these years.

The weakness in the leadership of the Defence Association in the immediate post-Ilbert Bill years was demonstrated in the failure of the Association to seize the opportunity offered from 1883 onwards to draw more closely into its ranks the Eurasian Association in Calcutta and, through its example, the various other Eurasian Associations then active in India. The opportunity had first arisen when towards the end of 1883 the Calcutta Eurasian Association had sought a closer tie with the EAIDA,[1] deciding in mid-November either to amalgamate or to affiliate with the Defence Association, and choosing by the end of that month to seek affiliation,[2] though laying down a number of conditions upon which it was prepared to do so. However, when the affiliation proposal came before the Defence Association Council at the end of January 1884, one of these conditions, the sixth, evoked considerable discussion. This condition reserved to the Eurasian Association 'the power to act as the special representative of the domiciled Anglo-Indian and Eurasian Community, and to maintain its individuality', and more specifically to hold itself 'free to refuse to act in concert with the Defence Association in regard to any question as to which the two bodies might not agree'. A sub-committee was set up by the Defence Association Council on the basis of whose report the EAIDA Council replied on 5 March to the Eurasian Association, stating that its rules did not allow of affiliation but only of amalgamation.[3] However, 'until such time ... as a Scheme for amalgamation [might] be agreed upon' as the Council vaguely put it, an 'arrangement' was suggested under

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1. EurAIA Report [1883-84], 2.
2. Ibid., and EAIDA Cl. progs. 15.11.1883, 62.
3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 25.1.1884, 13.3.1884, 81, 87 and EurAIA Report [1883-84], 3.

which each Association might appoint delegates 'for the purpose of discussing all questions of common interest, and adopting such concerted measures as [might] be deemed desirable for giving effect to the conclusions arrived at by the two Associations'.[1] When the Eurasian Association then countered with a request for a reconsideration of this decision and suggested that the Defence Association might amend its rules, the latter body rejected the request and the proposed 'arrangement' fell through too.[2]

In an informal way, however, the Eurasian Association did maintain loose links with the Defence Association Council by means of representatives on that Council. Thus the Rev W.H. Bray, who had succeeded Finter as Eurasian Association President when Finter left India in 1884, took the latter's place on the EAIDA Council, being replaced thereon in 1885/6 by W.C. Madge the Eurasian Association Secretary, the Association's presidentship then being vacant. From 1886/7 to 1888/9, in the absence of any Eurasian Association officer on Council,[3] two members of that Association, S.E.J. Clarke the EAIDA's former Honorary Secretary and H. Pratt a former Master of the Calcutta Trades' Association, served to maintain the informal contact. Between 1889/90 and 1896/7 W.H. Ryland, the Eurasian Association Vice President and then President, sat on the EAIDA's Council, serving in the last two years of this period as the Association's Honorary Treasurer.[4]

Though they were thus denied any formal institutional link, some common action between the EAIDA and the Eurasian organisations did continue. Thus in 1885, at the prompting of D.S. White, the President of the Eurasian Association in Madras, the Defence Association took up the cause of the formation of Eurasian regiments in the Indian Army, addressing Government on the subject, though without avail.[5] In 1887 the Council made representations to Government about the provision of local training in seamanship

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 13.3.1884, 87.

2. EurAIA Report 1884-85, 2, 28.

3. Madge, as recalled, had relinquished his Eurasian Association posts from 1886.

4. EurAIA Reports [1883-84], -, [1885-86], 13, 14, 1886, 18, 25, 1889, -, 1892, -, EAIDA Reports [1884], 4, [1885], -, 1896, 1.

5. EAIDA Report [1885], 10, 11.

for domiciled Anglo-Indian and Eurasian boys,[1] and in 1892, when the question of Eurasian regiments was again current, decided to be guided by the lead of the Eurasian Association in Calcutta in a renewed approach to Government.[2] But as the memory of the contribution which Eurasians had made in the Ilbert Bill struggle faded away so the Council's interest in the special problems of the Eurasians faded too, while the Eurasians and the domiciled Anglo-Indians, though appreciative of the Council's occasional interventions on their behalf, came to rely increasingly upon their own associations for action. It was symbolic perhaps that in 1888 the Council recorded, as an instance of a common stand with the Eurasian organisations, the wholly negative satisfaction of finding 'that the domiciled Anglo-Indian and Eurasian Communities have, through their distinctive Associations, declined to be involved in the political movement known as the Congress'.[3]

If the lack of a firm link with the Eurasian Associations and of active concern with their interests diminished the political range of the EAIDA in the post-Ilbert Bill period, a further instance of its shift away from an active political role can be seen in the way in which help for poor Europeans, principally domiciled Anglo-Indians, came to be treated as benevolent work rather than the occasion for pressure upon Government. Sir Alexander Wilson, chairing the Defence Association's third Annual General Meeting on 4 May 1887, declared that it was unjust to imply that the Association, having steered the Europeans safely through a severe crisis, was now content to rest on its oars. But the activities to which the Association turned to refute such a slur were benevolent, not political - educational and charitable works provided for in its Prospectus, but as a speaker at the meeting pointed out, long neglected.[4] But even on these issues the Council's activities were scarcely dramatic or effective. Thus W.C. Madge, at the Council's request, drew up in July 1885 a report on the education of European children in India, but with the code of European education introduced in 1883 'still

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1. EAIDA Report 1887, 5, 6, 51.
2. EAIDA Cl. progs. 26.8.1892, 395-6.
3. EAIDA Report 1888, 17.
4. Englishman 5.5.1887, EAIDA Report 1887, 4.

on its trial', the Council in 1887 did 'not feel at liberty to offer any definite conclusion on the subject without a fuller enquiry'.[1] No such fuller enquiry however was made or brought to members' general notice in the next fifteen years and it was left to the Eurasian Associations to pursue the matter further.[2] The Defence Association's Council in similar fashion decided that the intention of the Prospectus was not to distribute Association funds for purely charitable relief,[3] but rather to help in diminishing pauperism generally amongst its own communities by encouraging the development of industries which should find occupation for distressed persons. Under this latter head help was afforded to the Women's Friendly Society in Calcutta whose aim was to provide industrial training to young women in need and help them in finding jobs,[4] but that was the limit of the Association's action.

The link between the Defence Association and the Friendly Society continued in the future.[5] But that it had ever been forged seems to have been a matter of chance - that L.P. Pugh the barrister-husband of the foundress of the Society, Mrs. Pugh, was well acquainted with the Association from the time he had been one of its legal advisers in the Ilbert Bill days. The lack of similar links with other benevolent institutions at this period was probably attributable to sheer ignorance of the Association's existence. An attendance of only nine persons at the EAIDA's sixth Annual General Meeting on 27 February 1890[6] -a great drop from the some two hundred members present at the first AGM on 20 March 1885,[7] and a far cry indeed from the three thousand or more who had packed out the Town Hall meeting in 1883 - was scarcely likely to attract the attention of the outside world.

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1. EAIDA Report [1885], 6, 49-56, and 1887, 4.

2. See A.A. D'Souza, Anglo-Indian Education for a review of the subject.

3. It thus refused direct charity to a proposed European and Eurasian orphanage in Allahabad, expressing itself prepared merely to circulate the orphanage's subscription books in Calcutta. EAIDA Report 1888, 13, 45-6.

4. Ibid. 1887, 6, 52, Thacker's 1888, 193.

5. See Report ibid. 1888, 42, and 1890, 40, 41.

6. Englishman 28.2.1890. In addition to L.P.D. Broughton the Chairman and W.C. Madge, only two members of the Association's twenty-man Council were present.

7. Ibid., 21.3.1885.

The sorry general meeting attendance in 1890 was merely the outward expression of an inward decay. The consequences of having an inept and uninspiring leadership in a period when no dramatic issues fired the feelings of the Association's members was quickly seen in a falling off in membership figures. Few new members joined while retirement or death thinned the Association's ranks. Thus 'Britannicus', who had played such a leading part in the Ilbert Bill battle, died in July 1889. For a while after the Ilbert Bill victory he had continued to be very active in correspondence to the Englishman on behalf of the non-official European community,[1] but only with his death was his true name widely revealed as Gustavus Septimus Judge. Judge had spent more than fifty of his seventy three years in India, being closely connected with the tea industry in that period, but he had fallen on difficult times in his latter years,[2] though with help from charity he had been able to 'end his days in peace in Darjeeling'. The Defence Association, recognising its debt to the old polemicist, raised a subscription and perpetuated his memory by placing a memorial tablet over his grave at Darjeeling. 'This monument to "Britannicus"' ran the inscription, 'is raised by his grateful countrymen'.[3]

It was, however, overwhelmingly the lack of interest by existing members in keeping up their subscriptions rather than the occasional member's death, which caused the decline in the Defence Association's membership. At the close of 1884 this membership had been 1,104, much the same as at the end of 1883. Of these members, 254 were 'Resident', 543 'Non-Resident', 279 'Associate' and 28 'Foreign'.[4] At the close of 1885, however, the

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1. See, for example, his letter on trial by jury in Englishman 11.3.1884, the many letters from him therein in March, April and May 1885 on Assam tea plantation problems, and that printed 24.5.1886 regarding a draft Rent Law for Assam.

2. L.A. Hannagan, 'Darjeeling Planting then and now', in Assam Review and Tea News Nov. 1956, XLV No. 9, 636, mentions the purchase of the Beechwood Estate in Darjeeling by a German from the Judge family.

3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 31.10.1889 - 6.11.1890, 308-343, and EAIDA Reports 1889, 6, and 1890, 11.

4. EAIDA Report [1884], 31. Resident Members (namely those living in or within 30 miles of Calcutta), Non-Resident Members (those living elsewhere in India) and Foreign Members, were all Ordinary Members possessing voting rights. Associate Members, who paid a lower subscription than any in the Ordinary Member categories, were allowed to be present and speak at the Association's general meetings but were not, however, entitled to vote.

membership had halved to 499,[1] and though at the beginning of 1887 it was still 450[2] in June 1889 the Chairman, contemplating what was tactfully called a 'fair attendance' at the AGM, had to report a further decline to 388, and apologetically remarked 'I am sorry we have not a larger meeting'.[3] In 1890 only nine persons attended the AGM, and in 1891 only 12,[4] while by 1894 the membership, which included firms as well as individuals, had practically halved again since 1887, and stood at 238, comprising 195 Ordinary Members[5] and 43 Associates.[6] A decade after the Ilbert Bill the Defence Association was thus almost down to a fifth of the strength enjoyed in its initial flush of glory, and an analysis of its membership in 1894 provides a revealing insight into the manner in which the attrition in the intervening years had taken place.

Analysing geographically first of all,[7] it will be seen that 104 of the 238 members in this year were from Calcutta, and 96 from Bengal, Behar and Assam. North East India was still the Association's stronghold, though less well manned than it had been in Ilbert Bill days, but so far had its outside membership shrunk away in the meanwhile - a mere 38 remaining, some one sixth of the total membership - that the Defence Association had become to all intents and purposes a local North East India organisation, or, if the 18 North-Western Provinces and one Punjab member are

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1. Resident Members 191, Non-Resident 189, Associate 99, Foreign 20, see EAIDA Report [1885], 12.

2. Speech of Chairman at the third Annual General Meeting held 4.5.1887, reported in Englishman 5.5.1887.

3. Meeting reports 21.6.1889 in Englishman and Indian Daily News. The membership composition was Resident 156, Non-Resident 141, Associate 76 and Foreign 15. Around this time (as the Englishman 17.5.1888 reported) the Eurasian Associations in Calcutta Bombay and Madras had a membership of over 2,650.

4. See report of the meeting in Englishman 13.3.1891.

5. Resident 95 (including one Life Member abroad), Non-Resident 89, Foreign 11.

6. EAIDA Report 1894, 47-54. In contrast the membership strength of the Eurasian Association in Madras at the end of 1894 was 1,250, see Homeward Mail 22.7.1895.

7. Membership category was determined by the subscription paid, as follows: Resident and Non-Resident Members 12 Rs. and 10 Rs. each respectively half-yearly, Foreign Members 10 Rs. yearly and Associates 3 Rs. half-yearly. In this, and the further year 1901 analysis given below, some geographical anomalies have, however, been adjusted for, as for instance in the case of a member who though of Resident class category lived in Madras.

added, a North India organisation at best. Of the further 19 members, 5 were from Madras, 4 from Burma, one from the Central Provinces and 9 from Britain. The South Indian contingent were all from Madras city, and from Western India there was not a single member, neither Bombay nor Karachi being represented at all. Even in the NWP, major centres such as Allahabad had only two members, Lucknow, Naini Tal and Meerut only one apiece. Cawnpore produced none at all.[1]

Analysis by occupation and by interest group[2] throws further light upon the 1894 membership pattern. 43 members (18%) were from agency houses, (Jardine, Skinner, strong since the Keswick connection, alone having 6 members in India and abroad), with indigo and tea next in order with 33 and 31 members (some 14% and 13% respectively). Merchants, traders and lawyers followed next, with 21, 20 and 19 members (9%, 8%, 8%). Of the remaining 71 members comprising the 30% balance of membership, mining produced 7 members (6 in coal) and the silk, sugar and lac industries 6, 4 and 4 members each. Cotton was not represented, neither was South Indian planting nor the missionary, church and educational worlds. There were 5 Armenian members, all from the Apcar family, one of them (J.G. Apcar) a lawyer, and there were 4 women members, and three members from the professions. From the financial world came two bill and share brokers, a mofussil bank director and two members in insurance. Madge, the EAIDA Secretary, was of course a member, whilst Ryland (prominent in the Eurasian Association), and Clarke, Secretary of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, represented allied interest groups on the Defence Association's roll. Finally, in the very miscellaneous remainder were to be counted two District Police Superintendents, one Jail Superintendent, a former Darbhanga Raj manager, two brewers, a Calcutta steamer

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1. Allahabad's two members however included G.W. Allen who was in 1890 managing the Allahabad branch of Cooper, Allen & Co. the important Cawnpore merchanting firm. By 1894, though, the Allahabad branch was no longer in existence and G.W. Allen himself was working in the London branch of the company. It seems possible therefore that his Association literature was in practice sent care of the Cawnpore head office, and his membership should be attributed either to Britain or Cawnpore.

2. This and the geographical analysis are based on Thacker's 1892-94 and membership list details.

captain, and a postmaster, with 4 members from the Press, 6 from the railways, and a dozen other individuals completing the long list.

Reasons for joining the Association were varied. The leading agency houses had large scale mofussil interest in the planting and other industries to protect, as indeed had the important indigo, tea and general produce brokers like J. Thomas & Co., and W. Moran & Co. (the latter itself an agency house), and this concern was shared, in a narrower, more personal way, by those who were up country as proprietors or managers of indigo factories, tea plantations, mines or other concerns and so controlled large forces of native labour. The protection of business interests against any disturbance in the racial status quo was equally the concern of the shipping interest within the agency house system, Mackinnon, Mackenzie being a case in point, and of the lesser merchant and trade members in Calcutta and the mofussil. To lawyers the Association had perhaps a three-fold attraction: they themselves provided a service to the important Managing Agencies and European commercial firms as corporation lawyers and legal advisers - protection of existing European business interest was, by extension, in their interest too; secondly, the very fact that much of the EAIDA's work was concerned with the legal implications of Government legislation and with putting legal arguments to Government, meant that their professional services were of great value to the Association; lastly, there was probably an element of pride in acting on the community's behalf in negotiations with Government as well as appreciation of the consequent contacts and publicity. A demonstration that they also were European was presumably one motive of the continuing membership of the important Apcar family in the Association, (ungraciously though the EAIDA acted towards the Armenian Community),[1] whilst the motivations which kept the remaining members in the Association were primarily individual. Some old members probably retained a sentimental attachment to the EAIDA from its Ilbert Bill days, those lower

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1. See pages 109, 110.

down in the community hierarchy, or, like the domiciled Europeans, on its fringes, probably achieved an added sense of security through membership.

With no strong membership campaign by the Association's Council after the mid-1880's, and no major controversial issues to pursue, the fortunes of the EAIDA were very dependant upon the publicity their activities received. The Association had four members from the newspaper world, but of these two were from minor journals, the Asian, devoted to sport and natural history, and Indian Engineering, neither of which by their nature and circulation could render significant help. The other two newspapermen were H. Hensman, the assistant editor of the Pioneer in Allahabad, a powerful paper in the Punjab and the NWP, but remote from the Association in space and interest, and the elderly J. O'B.Saunders, the managing proprietor of the Calcutta published Englishman. This latter paper might have been of real assistance, but in fact it confined its publicity about the EAIDA to the once a year report of the Association's AGM, a course which the Stateman and the Indian Daily News followed, but with more brevity. (In the case of the News this was the more depressing since James Wilson, its proprietor, had been a member of Council from 1891/2 to 1893/4).[1] Indeed neither A. Macdonald nor Paul Knight, editors respectively of the Englishman and Statesman, nor the powerful-penned J.W. Furrell, back in India again as editor of the Indian Daily News, were even members of the EAIDA in 1894. If Calcutta's European Press was so little interested in the Defence Association it is hardly surprising that the community's mofussil Press ignored the Association almost totally. As the Defence Association's mofussil branches called into existence by the Ilbert Bill crisis dwindled and disappeared, so the EAIDA's fifty or more mofussil correspondents, of whom it had been so proud a decade previously,[2] likewise vanished into thin air.

The failure of the Association to bring the several Eurasian Associations into close and formal relations with itself has already been noted. Membership lists for the year in question,

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1. EAIDA Report 1891, Englishman 29.4.1892 and 11.2.1893.
2. EAIDA Report 1884 , 57-8, and 1885 , 34-5.

1894, show that little had been done to attract individual Eurasians either, even if the member from Jubbulpore, the one postmaster, and the handful of members from the railway centre of Asansol may be presumed to have all been Eurasians. In Ilbert Bill days railwaymen had formed a powerful wing of the Defence Association, now their number was down to six. The EAIDA Council had expressed their gratitude to Atkins, the railwaymen's leader, for his work in India and Britain in 1883 and 1884 in their support,[1] but they had done little since to keep him and his colleagues in the Association. The enterprising Atkins - who managed the Railway Service Press in addition to presiding over his new styled United Railway and Government Servants' Association - was thus never brought onto the EAIDA's Council before he left India in 1892. If the Association had cold-shouldered Atkins, what could the average rank and file railway member expect? Significantly again, in the light of his part at the head of the indigo planters at the time of the Ilbert Bill, W.B. Hudson, a Defence Association mofussil member of Council for some years thereafter, was allowed to drift away and by 1894 even to cease membership. With such apathy in the Council, and members thus vanishing, perhaps it was appropriate that among the trade members still faithful to the Association were Llewelyn & Co. the well-known Calcutta undertakers!

The Council periodically expressed regret that the work of the Association was not more widely known,[2] but not until 1895, when membership had fallen to 224, did it even circularise the Europeans in various parts of the country, calling their attention to the Association's objects and activities.[3] But any follow-up of the circular appeared to be confined to remarks in the annual report on the need for new members, so that from 224 again in 1896 and 218 in 1897 the members dropped to a mere 177 in 1898,

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1. In accordance with a mandate from the Council of the EAIDA Atkins had stayed on in Britain for a few months in 1884 after the wind up of the Ilbert Bill campaign, speaking further for the non-official European cause. See for example report of a Derby meeting condemning the general tenor of Ripon's policy in Allen's Indian Mail 6.5.1884.

2. See, for example, EAIDA Report 1894, 3.

3. Ibid. 1895, 3, 36-44.

of whom only 75[1] were of Resident class.[2] The appointment of A.A. Hannah of Sirajganj[3] as mofussil member of Council in 1899 was an expression of the Defence Association Council's indebtedness to his 'personal exertions' he having enlisted 50 of the 52 new members secured that year,[4] but even then, death and the retirement of old members, mainly those leaving the country, meant that the Association's membership increased only slightly, standing for a year or two at just over 200. In the first years of the new century, (since no one had followed Hannah's example), it slipped again to 198 and 188 only picking up marginally to 204 in 1903 when the Bain case[5] briefly stirred non-official European feeling.[6]

By the opening of the twentieth century the Defence Association's membership had thus fallen to a mere eighteen per cent of what it had been in the Ilbert Bill period and, taking the year 1901 as an example, the membership of the Association from outside the North East had so far dropped away as to be barely worth counting, comprising only 16 members. Of these 16 members 6 were in Britain, the one Bombay member was a retired Chittagong tea planter who had been the author of an early protest letter in Ilbert Bill days, the one Madras member was the lawyer

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1. Or 74 excluding a life member in Britain.

2. EAIDA Report 1896, 33-39, 1897, 67-72, 1898, 35-40. In the Ilbert Bill period some 12,500 copies of the Association's Prospectus and Rules had been circulated, see ibid. [1884], 70.

3. Proprietor of A. Hannah & Co., merchants and commission agents of that town.

4. EAIDA Report 1899, 1, 3. The only previous mofussil members of Council, namely W. Aitchison of Silchar, T.B. Curtis of Darjeeling, and W.B. Hudson of Muzaffarpur who had, as recalled, been appointed in 1883, were no longer in the Council. Aitchison had served from 1883 to the year 1888/9, and both Curtis and Hudson from 1883 to 1889/90.

5. See below page 123.

6. EAIDA Reports 1899-1902.

(F.G.) R. Branson[1] who had been prominent in the Madras protest against the same measure, 3 were from Burma, Hensman remained the sole Allahabad standard bearer, and the other 4 were scattered over the North-Western and Central Provinces and the Punjab. As before Karachi and Cawnpore were unrepresented,[2] as too was Bombay in effect. No less than 75 members by contrast were from Calcutta, and another 107 of the 198 total[3] were from Bengal, Behar and Assam.

The occupation and interest group pattern of the 1901 membership is as revealing as that of membership numbers. The large body of new members which Hannah had recently brought in from the Dacca-Narayanganj area - an influx overwhelmingly in the same merchant class as himself, and including a knot of jute merchants (not present as a separate sub-class in 1894) - had resulted in the merchant group now topping the membership list with 58 members.[4] However the new jute representation was probably fortuitous, the result of Hannah's personal contacts, and embraced many assistants as distinct from proprietors of merchant firms, for any jute industry worries were well-tackled by the Indian Jute Mills' Association in Calcutta.[5] Moreover the merchant domination of the Association was deceptive since 46 of the merchants paid only the cheaper subscription as Associates and so had no voting rights. This meant that power remained as before with members from the agency houses, 34 of whose 36 members were Ordinary Members.

The continuing domination of the agency house group in the Association's affairs was very evident: from 1892/3 to 1894/5 the President was J.N. Stuart of Balmer, Lawrie & Co., succeeded in 1895/6 by W.J.M. McCaw of Kettlewell, Bullen & Co., and from 1896/7 to 1899/1900 by M.C. Turner of Mackinnon, Mackenzie, and

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1. Possibly related to the Calcutta Town Hall meeting hero of 1883, J.H.S. Branson, who in the 1890's had been the Madras Advocate-General.

2. The latter town no longer even had a loose connection with the Association through G.W. Allen.

3. Ordinary Members 118 (Resident 68, Non-Resident 42, Foreign 8), Associates 80. Of the Foreign Members six had Indian addresses in the membership lists, whilst three Resident and one Non-Resident members were listed as in Britain.

4. This 58 includes 10 members from this region who, (though details are lacking), were probably of this group.

5. See chapter IV.

following the presidential interregnum of the barrister L.P. Pugh for 1900/1, W.A. Bankier from Jardine, Skinner held the office from 1901/2 to 1903/4.[1] These partners from the agency houses (and their number was supplemented by others who served as Vice President and Council members), had of course the advantage of being on the spot in Calcutta for approaches to the Government both of India and of Bengal, and were members of Calcutta clubs like the Bengal and the Tollygunge to which senior government officials also belonged, a factor which facilitated informal approaches to them. Moreover these agency house men provided active links with other non-official associations such as the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the ITA, and a number of them served on the Indian and/or Bengal Legislative Council - Cruickshank, Mackay, Stuart and Turner for example. They were in fact natural leaders, for their houses had very great weight in the business world. Thus in 1900 Begg, Dunlop with five partners and six senior assistants, held nearly twenty agencies as in tea, jute, sugar, coal, and moreover were agents for Begg, Sutherland & Co., the Cawnpore firm - itself an agency house, and with large interests in indigo and other produce. Jardine, Skinner in turn had four partners and fourteen senior assistants, and likewise held nearly twenty agencies in tea, coal, insurance and shipping. Balmer, Lawrie for its part held around twenty five agencies, principally in tea and insurance, but including flour and paper mills, a coal company and so on, whilst Mackinnon, Mackenzie with eight partners and over fifty senior European staff typified the importance of passenger and cargo shipping to European interests in India. These large agency houses of course had important connections not only throughout India, but also internationally, in Britain and elsewhere.[2]

After the 36 members of the Defence Association from the agency houses came, in order, 22 members in indigo (Hudson not among them), 19 in tea, 12 members of the legal profession and 11 from trade. The Armenian Apcar family (the barrister J.G. Apcar included), still faithfully provided four members and there may have been other Armenians among the new members Hannah had

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1. Bankier was also publicly prominent in 1903 as Sheriff of Calcutta.

2. Thacker's 1900, 324-344, 738.

introduced from the Dacca area where such firms as M. David & Co. had long been established. In the vice presidential ranks, though the agency house element still dominated, recognition was given to the advisory services of the lawyers' group and to the faithful Apcar family support down the years. Till the end of the decade the Vice Presidents were thus: 1892/3 and 1893/4, Mackay and the barrister R. Allen, 1894/5 Allen and McCaw, 1895/6 Allen and H.B.H. Turner, 1896/7 J.G. Apcar with J.M.G. Prophit (of Turner, Morrison & Co.),[1] and 1897/8 to 1899/1900 the barrister L.P. Pugh with D.A. Campbell of Begg, Dunlop. Exemplifying the growing importance of industry in India was the vice presidentship in 1900/1 of C. Deas of the engineering firm of Burn & Co., who served with Campbell as Vice President that year. The support from the trade group was also given belated recognition in the vice-presidentship of H. Elworthy, the general manager of F. Osler & Co. (lighting and glassware establishment) during the years 1901/2 to 1903/4 when Prophit was serving as the other Vice President. All the Vice Presidents were from Calcutta.

The coal and railway groups also provided three members each, as did the Press (Saunders, Hensman and the proprietor of Indian Engineering) and the professionals. Two police superintendents and an assorted half dozen individuals[2] made up the 1901 total of 198 members of the Defence Association. However South Indian planters, missionaries, churchmen and educationalists were again conspicuous by their absence. One solitary woman member of long standing remained in the Association, in the person of the wife (or widow) of a former Calcutta tradesman member. The Defence Association some two decades after the Ilbert Bill was thus shrunken not only in numbers, but in geographical and interest coverage too, and was but a pale shadow of its once so vigorous self.

By contrast, in the very years of EAIDA's decline, during which for thirteen years no Viceroy referred to the Association at

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1. H.B.H. Turner, as recalled, had been a partner in this same agency house.

2. Owing to lack of detail it was not possible to classify, with reasonable probability, six members here, as with a similar number from the membership in 1894.

all in any personal letter to the Secretary of State,[1] the Indian National Congress was making its slow but steady ascent and gaining increased influence on behalf of native Indian interests. Two years of busy activity following the Ilbert Bill year had culminated in the first Congress held at Bombay in late December 1885[2] and the growing attendances of 72, 434, 607, 1,248 and 1,889 registered representatives and delegates at the first five annual Congresses[3] stood in sharp contradistinction to the declining membership of the Defence Association, from 1,100 in 1883 to below 400 in 1889. The contrast between the attendance at the annual sessions of the Association and the Congress was equally marked: in 1894 when the Defence Association's AGM had to be postponed for lack of a quorum of seven Ordinary Resident Members present[4] the 10th Congress at Madras had 1,163 delegates and nearly 4,000 spectators.[5] Five years later in 1899 the 15th Congress, even after a limitation on delegate numbers, had 740 delegates and over 3,000 visitors, but only eight resident members of the Defence Association came to its 5 May AGM, not even half the seventeen man Council![6] Far from emulating the verbose and enthusiastic proceedings of the Congress, the Defence Association often seemed to wish to dispense with any discussion from the floor at all and to get through the resolution-passing formalities at its annual meetings with all possible speed. On occasion the Chairman even felt it was superfluous for him to make an address,[7] an attitude unthinkable to a Congress President!

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1. It was not mentioned by Dufferin or his successor Lord Lansdowne (Viceroy from December 1888 to January 1894). The first reference after Ripon's viceroyalty is given in Elgin to Hamilton 27.1.1898, Elgin P. MSS.Eur.F.84/16, 14.

2. See Mehrotra chs. V, VI, and B.P. Sitaramayya, History of the Indian National Congress, I, 11.

3. A. Besant, How India Wrought for Freedom, 5, 15, 36, 58, 75.

4. Englishman 14.4.1894, EAIDA Report 1894, 20.

5. Besant, 182.

6. Ibid. 291, Englishman 14.4.1894, EAIDA Report 1898, -, 1, and Sitaramayya, I, 53.

7. Reports of Defence Association's annual meetings 1896, 1899, 1900 in Friend of India 4.8.1896, 11.5.1899, EAIDA Report 1898, -, and Englishman 19.5.1900.

The problems of a dwindling and narrowing membership base were compounded by legal difficulties thrown up by the constitution of the Defence Association. As the Ordinary Members alone had voting rights according to the Association's rules, and as it was only the lesser part of these number that was normally resident in Calcutta, and of them only the few who bothered to come to the annual meetings, the Association was to find itself strangled by its own regulations when, very tardily, in the early 1900's it gave its mind seriously to attempts to increase its membership. Again, discussions from 1885 to 1889 had led to the tying up of the Association's surplus funds from the Ilbert Bill period in a manner which made it very difficult to use them.[1] With the Association's attention in these years largely focussed on legal technicalities aimed at 'putting itself in order' such as registration (in 1889) as a permanent, corporate body under the Indian Companies' Act 1882, the thoughtful watching and reaction to political developments was rather overlooked.[2]

Lacking any clear-cut major cause after the Ilbert Bill and with plentiful legal advice available from such prominent members as Sylvester Dignam the solicitor and the advocates J.G. Apcar and L.P. Pugh,[3] the main feature of the EAIDA's activities in the 1880's was its 'special work' of rallying in support of individuals whose rights and privileges as Europeans were thought to be under attack. The Council did make it a rule, however, 'not to take up ordinary cases[4] but only those where a principle is involved, or where the administration of the Criminal Code has resulted in injustice or injury to Europeans, or where the circumstances of the case, ... indicate that an European has fallen under the enmity of the police'.[5] The 'principle' involved here

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1. These funds, put in Trust as a permanent reserve, amounted to a little over a lakh of rupees. Any withdrawal from the Trust capital had to be made by special resolution passed in Extraordinary General Meeting by not less than three-fourths of the Association Members entitled to vote, confirmed by a majority of such members at a subsequent Extraordinary General Meeting held between three and four months after passing the first resolution. See Englishman 21.6.1889, 12.7.1889.

2. EAIDA Reports [1885]-1889.

3. Dignam (partner in Dignam & Robinson) and Apcar were regularly on the Association's Council in the 1880's.

4. For example it declined to interfere in 1889 on behalf of a discharged servant against his former employers.

5. EAIDA Report [1885], 8.

would appear to have been that the European deserved support wherever confrontation with a Native in the courts was involved. Whilst the EAIDA Council was wont to emphasise that its Association was defensive and not aggressive in nature and that the European community it represented was 'not inherently antagonistic to the natives',[1] such cases often seemed to belie the claim, and Cotton the radical Assam Chief Commissioner saw the Defence Association as having been organised for 'the express purpose of defending such cases'.[2] 'A paragraph is published in the newspapers headed "A Planter in trouble"', he wrote,[3] 'and forthwith all the flood-gates of passion and prejudice are let loose'. Examples of this 'special work' of the Association are provided by the Khulna and Golaghat cases of 1884, in both of which the EAIDA made representations to the local Government. In the first case J.R. Rainey, a Khulna zamindar, had been arraigned before an Indian magistrate and bound over to keep the peace, following a dispute with one of his ryots about the cutting of the indigo crop, while in the second, (G.W.?) Francis, a young assistant on a tea garden, had been accused, falsely as the Association alleged, of causing the death of a coolie woman through a brutal and cowardly assault on her. In the Enge case in 1885 - when a German employee of a native coal owner, believing his bungalow was being attacked, had killed a Baboo with a shot 'to frighten the supposed robbers away', - the Defence Association made an offer to the head of the local German community to bear one-fourth of the expenses of the prisoner's 'proper defence'. Particularly instructive was the Purneah case, involving the well-known indigo planter R.C. Walker[4] who had been arrested by a native sub-inspector 'of his own motion' and treated 'not only as a criminal but as a criminal helpless in the hands of a vindictive and oppression-loving Police'. This was quickly taken up by the Association which saw the liberty and safety of all mofussil Europeans liable to be jeopardised and imperilled if native police

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1. EAIDA Report [1885], 4, 5 and 1886, 2.
2. H.J.S. Cotton, New India, 48.
3. Ibid.
4. Walker, as noted, had been prominent in the Purneah protest in the Ilbert Bill fight.

could act thus against them. In an expensive litigation the Defence Association helped Walker take the case up to the Calcutta High Court, only dropping it when a reversal of the Muzaffarpur judge's acquittal of the native police officer could not be obtained there. Despite its lack of success, the Defence Association Council felt that its action had 'produced a healthy moral effect, and had in all parts of Bengal given a check to a tendency on the part of the Police to use their powers harmfully'.[1] In 1886 and 1887 cases taken up included that of G.S. Sykes[2] in which the Council influenced the Bengal Government to censure a deputy magistrate who had issued an arrest warrant against Sykes when a mere witness summons had been required, and that of A.J. Judge in Cachar who 'had been severely assaulted for peacefully endeavouring to recover a run-away cooly'. The Council also gave 'anxious consideration' to the case of F.W. Gibbons, an Assam tea planter, (accused of forging the mark of a cooly to a labour contract), in which the verdict arrived at by a European jury was subject to review and to an enhancement of sentence by an Indian judge, a 'defect' in section 307 of the Criminal Procedure Code[3] which threatened to undermine the principle of the Concordat of 1883. In the event the Council did not take up the larger issue, but it did lend its moral support to Gibbons's counsel in seeking to reduce the punishment awarded.[4] In 1888 and 1889 however, as the Council noted, eight applications for legal aid were turned down on the ground that no issue of principle was involved. Perhaps as a consequence, in 1890 only three minor

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1. EAIDA Reports [1884], 14-17, [1885], 6-8.

2. The Defence Association was to be involved in a further case on his behalf in 1900 when Sykes, as receiver of the estates of an Indian, failed to produce estate receipts in court, and was criminally prosecuted.

3. As W. Stokes, II, 172 explains, section 307 dealt with the procedure where a Sessions Judge, completely disagreeing with the verdict of all or the majority of a jury, could, 'for the ends of justice', then submit the case to the High Court, which could then either acquit the accused, or convict him with 'such sentence as might have been passed by the Court of Session'.

4. EAIDA Report 1886, 10, 12, ibid. 1887, 8-10, 48-50, and Indian Planters' Gazette 14.9.1886.

cases were brought to the notice of the Association,[1] and the Council in its annual report felt obliged to point out 'that Europeans scattered throughout the Mofussil' were apparently 'unaware of the help which the Association has been established to give in such cases'.[2]

Besides such legal work the Defence Association was also involved in what might be termed court jurisdiction questions. Here the usual role of the EAIDA was not that of a principal mover but rather of a supporter of the far more influential Chambers of Commerce and their lesser counterparts, the Trades Associations, who were pressing Government in the matter. In 1886 the Indian Government had been contemplating the transfer of certain types of comparatively unimportant litigation from the High Courts to either Small Causes Courts or to District Courts, and though the experiment had been abandoned in Calcutta in 1886, at the start of the 'nineties the idea was revived in respect of the Madras High Court. Watchful as ever where European legal rights were at stake the EAIDA joined the Madras Chamber in making representations on the issue. It joined forces with the Chamber again in the mid-1890's against the appointment of a native vakil[3] as officiating Attorney-General in Madras. Government interference in the Madras High Court's jurisdiction was in fact regarded as a dangerous precedent.[4] Again, in the early 'nineties the EAIDA joined with the Bengal Chamber and the Calcutta Trades' Association in protesting against the delays and general shortcomings in the Calcutta Court of Small Causes. Later, in 1897, it decided to maintain a watching brief in regard to the unsatisfactory pattern of High Court jurisdiction in non-regulation tracts, an issue which caused the plantation industry deep concern when runaway coolies had to be recaptured.[5] As the decade drew to

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1. The cases concerned assault and looting, trespass, and the execution of an allegedly unnecessary warrant of arrest.

2. EAIDA Report 1888, 13-17, ibid. 1889, 7 and 1890, 9-10.

3. A court pleader.

4. See remarks of President W.J.M. McCaw at Defence Association's 11th annual general meeting reported in Englishman 11.5.1896.

5. See ITA Report 1898, 12, 13, regarding absconding of Sylhet tea garden coolies into the independent state of Hill Tippera.

a close the Association joined with Calcutta's European commercial and trade associations in protesting against the dilatory procedures in the Calcutta Police Court, while at the start of the new century it was to be found adding its support, together with that of the Bengal and Madras Chambers, to the pleas by the Rangoon Chamber of Commerce and the local Trades Association to have an experienced barrister rather than a civil servant appointed as Chief Justice of the Lower Burma Chief Court.[1]

Legal issues and cases, though representing a sizeable part of its work, were not the sole concern of the Defence Association in the 1880's and 1890's. Thus the EAIDA expressed concern in 1885 at the adroit use of the system of local self-government by the Natives to their own ends and to the detriment of European interests in the mofussil. In 1887 and 1888, when a Calcutta Municipality measure was under consideration, representations were made to the Bengal Government against the relegation of Europeans to the position of an ineffective minority in the Calcutta Corporation. In the late 1890's when a Calcutta Municipality amendment Bill was being discussed, (it became Bengal Act III of 1899), the Defence Association took occasion to protest about the unsanitary condition and neglected state of many parts of the city, and to suggest that Calcutta's building regulations could with more benefit be embodied in a separate Act rather than in the Municipality Act itself.[2] Among other diverse matters given attention, the Association joined in the expression of opposition, both Indian and European, to the Indian Government's annual exodus to Simla which for the summer months limited the

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1. EAIDA Reports 1886, 1891, 1894, 1896-1901, Englishman 11.2.1893 (Report of the Association's 9th AGM), Bengal C/Comm Reports 1890-91, 1891-92, 1895-96, 1896-97 to 1901, Madras C/Comm Reports 1890-91, [1896], 1901 and CTA Reports 1891, 1893, 1895, 1899, 1901. The Bombay Chamber, aloof as in Ilbert Bill days, did not support Rangoon's Europeans in the Burma Court issue, see Bombay C/Comm Reports 1900, 123-4 and 1901, 135.

2. EAIDA Report [1885], 9, 48-9; 1887, 4, 34-42; 1898, 3-4, 27-9. Though the new Bill had been brought in after 'the old Corporation broke down hopelessly' and itself entailed Viceroy Curzon acting as arbitrator between European and Indian interests in the Corporation before it came to its final form, (see Curzon to Hamilton 11.10.1899, Curzon C. MSS.Eur.F. 111/158, 208), the Defence Association preferred to remain silent on the delicate representation issue involved.

influence which they could bring to bear upon it. The high point here was a Calcutta Town Hall meeting on 14 July 1886, which Dufferin described as 'against the summer panic, as it is called'. This he dismissed - 'of course Calcutta opinion on such a subject is not worth much' - but he made the shrewd comment that 'the demonstration has been produced by a certain amount of local irritation in the European community in connection with the proceedings of the Finance Committee'.[1] Government finance was, of course, another regular theme of concern of the Association, which generally supported the Bengal Chamber in making representations about financial reforms and the annual budget proposals. Two other miscellaneous issues which attracted attention were proposed changes in Indian Factory Legislation, which it represented to Government as 'uncalled for and mischievous', and the delicate issue of European vagrancy, a problem which always aroused uncomfortable racial feelings.[2]

Each of these matters touched on by the Association linked it with some segment or interest group in the European community. But it was always legal issues which seemed to be the widest causes for concern - two prominent issues being the jury question and the amendment of the Legal Codes. In 1892 the Defence Association Council had drawn the special attention of the Bengal Chamber, the Calcutta Trades' Association, the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association, the Indian Tea Association, the Jute Association, the Property Defence Association, the British Indian Association, 'and any other Society likely to co-operate in the matter', to the general tendency towards executive interference in the workings of the courts.[3] In October of that year this general concern of the Council came to much sharper focus when, at only five days' notice to the public, the right to trial by jury was abolished for certain types of offences - including

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1. Statesman 15.7.1886 giving report of the Town Hall meeting, and Dufferin to Sir Richard Cross (Secretary of State) 6.8.1886, Dufferin C. MSS.Eur.F.130/5, 85.

2. See EAIDA Reports 1886-1891, and Bengal C/Comm Report 1885-86, 161-173 for criticism of hastily introduced Income Tax. Civil Service and Legislative Council issues are discussed in later chapters.

3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 29.7.1892, 26.8.1892, 389-396. Illustrations of such interference had been noticed in the Bengal Government's Resolution on the 1891 Report on the Police Administration of Calcutta.

offences against public tranquility and those affecting the human body - in a number of Bengal districts.[1] These were mofussil districts in which the non-official community had large planting and other interests, and as Lansdowne reported to Kimberley, the offences in question were those in regard to which juries had been shown to be absolutely untrustworthy.[2] The Association quickly took counsel's opinion as to whether the court rights of European British subjects would be affected, - for the Ilbert Bill agreement had specifically granted jury rights to such persons in the mofussil and 'Europeans had a right to be consulted before any change affecting juries in the mofussil was introduced'. However, the opinion received indicated that there was little to worry about as a European British subject would only be tried for the relevant offences without a jury where he omitted to claim his option of jury trial as section 451A of the Criminal Procedure Code entitled him to do.[3] As the Europeans and Anglo-Indians, in counsel's opinion, would not be affected, (though Indians would be), the Defence Association Council at the end of November decided, by eight to five, to proceed no further in the matter beyond informing Association members of the opinion received.[4]

At the next Council meeting however, at the start of December 1892, strong prejudices were revealed when it was pointed out that the Prospectus of 1883 had spoken of the Association being formed to watch over and protect not merely Europeans, Anglo-Indians and European British subjects generally but also 'Americans, Armenians, Eurasians, and others associated with Europeans by community of sympathies and interests', and that counsel's reassuring opinion had been in respect of only the first category of members. The reply by W.K. Eddis, a partner in the

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1. See announcement in Calcutta Gazette 26.10.1892, Part 1, 959, and EAIDA Cl. progs. 25.11.1892, 408.

2. Lansdowne to Kimberley 8.11.1892, Lansdowne C. MSS.Eur.D. 558/5, 144.

3. See W. Stokes, II, 221-2.

4. EAIDA Cl. progs. 28.10.1892 and 25.11.1892, 398-408. The Council took a similar step in 1894 when it merely reproduced for members' information a Home Department circular relating to the protection of non-British Europeans in the mofussil from the disadvantage of being tried by native juries who could not understand them, see EAIDA Report 1894, 6, 45-6.

firm of Sanderson & Co., solicitors, that 'he had looked through the list of members of the Association and found that only very few were not European British subjects, and the Council had nothing to do with any others who should fight for themselves' - 'Eurasians and Armenians had their own Associations to think for their general interests', caused considerable resentment. However, though an attempt was made to smooth matters over, the Council revealed its true colours when, by a majority of nine to five, the Council adopted Eddis's motion 'that in the opinion of this Council it is not desirable that this Association take any action in regard to the question of trial by jury even though it is admitted that Europeans other than European British Subjects and Eurasians not being European British Subjects may be affected by the notification'.[1]

J.G. Apcar, the Armenian barrister who had worked hard in the Ilbert Bill cause in 1883, was not on Council in December 1892 but when elected to Council again for the fifth time in February 1893[2] he raised the question afresh, on 24 March. He stressed that 'there was no representative Armenian Association to which his community could look for the expression of their views', but he was unable to influence the Council to rescind the Eddis resolution and had to rest content with a reaffirmation of Rule II of the Association whereby the Armenian community was to

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 8.12.1892, 410-15. The nine for the motion included J.G. Womack of Harman & Co., tailors, (a past Master of the Calcutta Trades' Association), Eddis, W.H. Ryland (the Eurasian Association President) and A. Macdonald the editor of the Englishman, whilst against were J.N. Stuart of the Balmer, Lawrie & Co. agency house - the then EAIDA President, W.O. Bell-Irving of Jardine, Skinner, H.B.H. Turner, a former Vice President, J. Wilson the Indian Daily News proprietor and editor and S.E.J. Clarke. Clarke opinioned that 'if such views' (as Eddis's) prevailed 'he might as well advise a dissolution of the Association'.

2. He had previously served on Council in 1883/4, 1884/5, 1885/6 and 1887/8.

be among those entitled to the Association's aid in the sphere of Benevolent activities.[1] So much for solidarity with the just over two hundred Armenians in Calcutta,[2] and their brethren elsewhere in Bengal, (who were now to turn inwards, remaining inherently a-political till the 1930's, concentrating rather on benevolent work and achieving success in business and the professions).[3] As for the Jews, since their brief appearance in the limelight in March 1883 neither Ezra nor Gubboy had ever been on the Defence Association Council, nor apparently were there any Jews among the Defence Association's membership in 1894. (Calcutta's lightish skinned Sephardi Jewry in fact were declared 'non-European' in 1885, and were to let another forty four years pass before they stirred themselves in seriousness on this point in 1929).[4]

The Defence Association, which had remained alert to any issue affecting trial by jury throughout the period 1892 to 1894,[5] stirred itself into action again when Bill No. 16 of 1895,

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 17.2. and 24.3.1893, 428-39. Apcar's remarks here need to be taken with some qualification as an Armenian Association had recently been formed in Calcutta in the wake of the great feeling and unrest aroused in Russian and Turkish Armenia in 1889 and 1890 following atrocities on Armenians in Turkey. This Association's objects were 'the furtherance of the interest and advancement of the welfare of the Armenians in India, Armenia and elsewhere'. See Ara 1892, I, nos. 1 & 3, 24, 68. In the course of the discussion at the 24 March meeting Apcar revealed that the very name "European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association" had been deliberately and carefully considered (in 1883) with a view to the Association's future policy. The expression "European British Subject" had been left out of the title, he mentioned, 'because it was felt that it stank in the nostrils of the Government here, and could carry no weight with any influential party in England; whereas by linking its fate with Europeans in general, including Germans and other foreigners, who were specially mentioned at the time, as well as Americans, and thus forming an alliance between all nationalities in sympathy with Englishmen in India, the Association would carry weight both in this country and in Parliament'.

2. Their then population was around a third of what it had been in the 1830's, see H.A. Stark, 'Armenians in India', in Calcutta Review Jan. 1894, XCVIII, No. CXCV, 145.

3. See Seth, 541-49, Basil, 79-216 and H.M. Nadjarian, Life Story of Mr. A.M. Arathoon.

4. Musleah, 333, 345, 347.

5. Lansdowne noted European suspicion of the extension of trial by jury to offences against the marriage laws, for example, bigamy. See Lansdowne to Kimberley 7.12.1892, Lansdowne C. MSS.Eur.D. 558/5, 150.

a Bill to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1882, showed Government apparently intent on upsetting the security European British subjects had obtained in trial by jury under the Ilbert Bill settlement. The Bill proposed to amend Section 303 of the Criminal Procedure Code[1] in a manner which would allow a judge to cross-examine a jury on its verdict, something which to the EAIDA Council's mind was 'uncalled for, inexpedient and contrary to the spirit of English law', since an appeal against a jury's verdict could well be founded on points arising in such cross-examination. In a request to the Legislative Department on 7 January 1896 not to persevere with the proposed amendment the Council warned that otherwise 'the door would be opened to great abuses'.[2] Though the Government of India then dropped the proposal[3] the whole incident it was felt furnished 'a striking illustration of the manner in which the Association may any day be suddenly called on to interfere on behalf of the community [over] whose interests it is its duty jealously to watch'.[4]

In January and February 1898 the Defence Association Council addressed the Legislative Department again, this time about changes in the Criminal Procedure Code and the Penal Code by

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1. The section allowed a judge to ask a jury 'such questions as are necessary to ascertain what their verdict is', see Stokes, I, 171. Government opinions leading to the proposed law change are given in Gazette of India 5.10.1895, supplement.

2. EAIDA Report 1895, 32-36.

3. The lawyer, Sir Griffith Evans, who was a member of the Legislative Council, had told Elgin that both the Natives and the Europeans objected to the new Jury Bill, the former because they feared it would oppress them, the latter because the jury was their bulwark against any Native control over them, and he professed to the Viceroy 'to be in dread of a combination of Natives and Europeans'. As Elgin explained to the Secretary of State, 'neither I, nor my Council, have any wish to force an amendment of the law that would raise a dangerous agitation'. See Elgin to Hamilton 23.10.1895, Elgin P. MSS.Eur.F.84/13, 150-1.

4. EAIDA Report 1895, 5, 6. A year or so previously, when Government had brought in an amending and strengthening Police Act following the cow-killing riots in the country in the summer of 1893, the Association, though sympathetic to the new measure, had effectively protested against giving Magistrates (necessarily including Natives) wide executive powers. See Report ibid. 1894, 6, Lansdowne to Kimberley 1.8.1893-16.1.1894, Lansdowne C. MSS.Eur.D.558/6, 118-202, and Elgin to H.H. Fowler (then Secretary of State) 27.2.1895, Elgin P. MSS.Eur.F.84/13, 31.

Amendment Bills then under discussion.[1] The EAIDA leadership regarded it as of supreme importance to dissuade Government from giving power (under the section 108A of the first Bill) to a Magistrate 'acting on information only' to require a person to give security for good behaviour on the ground of his abetting, attempting to or actually disseminating orally or in writing any obscene, seditious or defamatory matter. Not only was it 'unnecessary and uncalled for' to accord Magistrates (and Indians among them) the extra proposed powers, but the oral reference in the section would too readily permit the harassment by the spiteful of persons who had merely spoken unthinkingly.[2] The Viceroy Elgin decided not to flinch however, and though Evans on behalf of the non-official Europeans took the matter up personally with the Viceroy and in the Legislative Council, the agitation ultimately spent itself and the new Criminal Procedure Code Bill was duly passed in March 1898.[3] The EAIDA likewise found fault with the second Bill dealing with legislation against sedition. This Bill was one outcome of the imprisonment of Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the editor of the Kesari, for an article in that paper in mid-June 1897 held to have incited the murder of Plague Commissioner Rand with Lieutenant Ayerst in Poona.[4] Whilst 'the Calcutta [European] merchant[s] would plump for a Vernacular Press Act ... they have been persuaded by their lawyers that we are not doing the work in the best way', Elgin reported to Hamilton, adding that in all the 'very difficult proceedings' in the Legislative Council it had been 'Sir G. Evans ... the spokesman of the opposition' who had been 'really dangerous'.[5] Sir James Westland, the Finance Member of Elgin's Executive Council, advised the Viceroy to cultivate Bengal's Advocate-General, the Armenian Sir Gregory Charles Paul. Thus consulted, Paul would 'quite change his attitude, and

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1. EAIDA Report 1897, 4, 52-64.
2. Ibid., 53.
3. Elgin to Hamilton 10, 17, 24.2.1898, 17.3.1898, Elgin P. MSS.Eur.F.84/16, 27, 30, 32-34, and Leg. Cl. progs. 12.3.1898, XXXVII, 379.
4. See S.A. Wolpert, Tilak and Gokale, 83-102.
5. Elgin to Hamilton 27.1.1898 and 10.2.1898, Elgin P. MSS.Eur. F.84/16, 14, 26. Evans had been knighted in 1892.

moderate that [European] portion of the opposition which alone need be regarded'.[1] Cultivating Paul, parrying Evans, and interviewing and winning over Allan Arthur, President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce,[2] Elgin pushed through the Penal Code Bill despite some mutterings in the Englishman.[3]

The limitations upon the influence and activity of the Defence Association which made it possible for Elgin to push through his measures without too much concern for its views were set of course by the decline in the membership and resources of the Association. This decline was well illustrated at this period by the problem of the London Committee of the EAIDA. That Committee had been set up to co-ordinate the campaign in Britain against the Ilbert Bill. Once British rights had been protected by the Concordat the question was what should be done with the Committee. Sir Alexander Arbuthnot, its President, in a letter to members, published in Allen's Indian Mail a day later, on 11 March 1884, argued that 'the time has arrived for dissolving the Anglo-Indian Defence Association ... formed in this country in June last' and he accordingly made a public pronouncement 'that the Association in question is now dissolved'.

Rather more than five years later, in November 1889, discussion on Legislative Councils for India by the Defence Association Council in Calcutta led to renewed attention to 'the establishment of some kind of Committee or Agent in London'. The views of Keswick, back in Britain some years now, were accordingly sought, stress being laid on the desire to achieve representation 'without much expense to the Association'. After consultation with Sir Roper Lethbridge, the M.P. who had been 'the Council's chief

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1. Westland to Elgin 7.2.1898, Elgin P., MSS.Eur.F.84/72, 41. Mackenzie Chalmers, the Legal Member, had (wrongly) reported to the Viceroy a little earlier, (see Elgin to Hamilton 27.1.1898, Elgin P. MSS.Eur.F.84/16, 14), that 'the Anglo-Indian Defence Association ... are chiefly Armenians'.

2. Arthur sat, like Evans, as an Additional Member of the Legislative Council.

3. Elgin to Hamilton 10.2.1898 Elgin P., MSS.Eur.F.84/16, 26, ibid. 24.2.1898, 19, 20, and Leg. Cl. progs. 18.2.1898 XXXVII, 152. The European objections raised had been principally concerned with proposed amendments to sections 124A and 505 of the Indian Penal Code, see EAIDA Report 1897, 54, 55.

correspondent in London' in 1883,[1] Keswick sent back a plan for the 'establishment of an office in London at a cost of £300 a year'. This proposal the Council rejected in March 1890 as too expensive. All that was needed, the Council argued, was the 'occasional supply of information, and the purchase and transmission of [parliamentary] bills affecting Europeans in India'. Further correspondence with Keswick led the Council to resolve on 29 January 1891 'that Mr. Louis Bruce be appointed London Agent of the Association at a salary of £20 per annum, plus all out of pocket costs'. In early August that year the Calcutta Council wrote to Bruce requesting him to 'wait on Mr. J.J.J. Keswick and others in London, for instructions regarding the working of the London Committee'. The problem of establishing an agency within the now very slender means of the Association seemed to have been solved.

However on 4 March 1892 Bruce wrote back, to the Council's dismay, 'reporting an inaugural meeting for the formation of a London Committee',[2] suggesting 'the hiring of a room in London', and asking for a remittance to cover the costs involved in these activities. He was curtly reminded that the Council 'did not contemplate incurring any but the most restricted expenditure in London'.[3] The Calcutta Council paid lip service to the value of the London Committee, and sought its aid to arrest any further attacks upon the independence of the High Courts in India or to secure publication of official papers on the matter,[4] but the Council's parsimonious attitude, a combination of political short-sightedness and the tying up of its surplus funds, undermined its

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1. The Calcutta Council was in parallel correspondence with Lethbridge regarding the Indian Councils Bill then under parliamentary consideration.

2. Bruce had written to nearly 300 members of the old Ilbert Bill Committee for this meeting on 1 March 1892 at Limmer's Hotel. The Calcutta Council had moreover suggested (see EAIDA Report 1891, 3) that Association members retiring from India should on arrival in England leave their addresses with Bruce.

3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 28.11.1889, 27.3.1890, 29.1. and 24.8.1891, 28.3.1892, 310-379, and EAIDA Reports 1889, 1890 and 1891.

4. EAIDA Cl. progs. 27.5.1892, 386, and 25.8.1893, 457.

very existence. In April 1894 it was even suggested that it was not necessary to have the London Committee meet regularly, nor to draw up a plan of work for them; all that was required, the Council argued, was that 'their attention might from time to time be requested to matters specifically needing it'.[1] (They bolstered up their argument by pointing out that in any case 'only four or five members' attended the meetings which Bruce chose to call in the 'out of the way' Anderton's Hotel, and they did nothing much in the way of business).[2]

Following some attempt to keep costs down still further - their past President, Sir Alexander Wilson, was asked to see if Sir H. Seymour King, head of H.S. King & Co. Bankers and East India Agents,[3] would give them the use of a room and staff - the idea of establishing an active working committee in London was 'held in abeyance until the foundations of the parent society have been more widely spread in [India]',[4] and was then finally abandoned on the grounds of the large expenditure involved. The office of London Agent was to follow suit, abolished at the end of January 1898 as the Agent had nothing to do 'beyond ordering out Parliamentary papers, which the [Calcutta] Secretary could easily and much less expensively, obtain from the publishers direct'.[5]

Since in September 1894 the office of the Association in Calcutta had been moved in search of lower rents from 5 Old Court House Street to the more modestly priced accommodation at No. 10-1, and then again in 1897 to 1 Mangoe Lane for a probably similar reason,[6] the pinch of poverty can be seen to have become quite severe.

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 27.4.1894, 16.

2. The hotel was probably in the Highgate area, where Bruce lived at 11, Northwood Road. Since there is mention also of meetings held in his chambers, Bruce, it would appear, was a barrister.

3. King was a Conservative M.P. and a London Chamber of Commerce Councillor.

4. EAIDA Report 1895, 4.

5. EAIDA Cl. progs. 11.1.1895, 30, 28.1.1898, 111. In 1894, visits to England of Council members Clarke and Turner had provided a personal contact between the Association and its London Committee, (see 1894 Report, 4), but in 1898 the abolishment of the Agency did not even merit a mention in the EAIDA's current Report.

6. EAIDA Reports 1894, 4, and 1897, 1. Annual rent, Rs.1,200 in 1896, was thus Rs.840 in 1899.

That it was so ought, perhaps, to be attributed to the actions of the legal members of the Defence Association and its Council. They had always been an active group - the great majority lived in Calcutta where their work threw them constantly together - and sitting on Council year in year out they had an influence upon the working of the Defence Association out of all proportion to their numbers. Thus in 1894 there were five lawyers on the seventeen-man Council, only members from the agency houses mustering a stronger group, and in 1901 there were five lawyers on the fourteen-man Council, the largest group present. It was the influence of these lawyers - with their concern for legal technicalities rather than wider political considerations - which had been dominant in the EAIDA Funds Sub-Committee in the period 1885-89, when a decision had to be taken concerning the balance of a lakh or more of rupees collected during the Ilbert Bill period.[1] They had ensured that the Association's capital was tied up in a Trust Fund, and tied so tightly that in later years, when the Association was starved for money, it was forced to depend upon the limited and gradually dwindling current sums coming in since the capital could not be touched except through a most complex series of procedures.[2] Since the Association had also halved its subscription rates for some years while its 'ordinary requirements' allowed of such a step,[3] by 1895 the Association had found its expenditure exceeding current income by approaching 25 per cent.[4] It was this legally created impasse, abetted by deficient financial planning vision, which prevented the creation of an effective London Committee,[5] and in 1898 produced the situation in which Madge

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1. EAIDA Reports [1885]-1889.

2. The formalities involved holding two Extraordinary General Meetings and the approval in the first instance of at least three quarters of the members entitled to vote (see footnote 1, page 102). But in 1894, for example, of the 195 Ordinary Members only 95 were of Resident class so that assembling a three-fourths majority or even the subsequent simple majority required would have been extremely difficult.

3. EAIDA Report [1885], 56-7; 1888, 18.

4. Ibid. 1895, 8-9.

5. This at a time when both the Indian National Congress and the Eurasian Association were establishing their committees in London. See Besant, 120, Wedderburn, 87-96, and Indian Daily News 24.3.1897, overland summary.

had to report that the funds were so low that the Association could not even buy a typewriter for the office.[1]

The narrowness of the lawyers' vision may also have contributed to the failure of the Association's leaders to study, learn from and analyse the development of the Indian National Congress and other Indian political movements in these years.[2] These leaders did not give much attention to the evidence of Indian feeling shown in the emotional and widespread Indian farewells to Ripon - though an article in the Pioneer Mail in 1884 had drawn attention to its importance: 'What has evoked it? ... does there lie beneath it a deeper significance, which those who are resident in India for private ends, no less than those who are responsible for the administration of India, will do well to attempt to understand?'.[3] And when the Congress had emerged their responses were almost uniformly negative. Thus they were happy to applaud and cheer Dufferin at the St. Andrew's Day Dinner in November 1888 when he put the Congress fully in its very modest place.[4] They cordially approved the (Calcutta) Eurasian Association's refusal the same year of the invitation to join Congress, though the Defence Association Council did 'not think it advisable to issue any public declaration on the subject'.[5] And when in 1893 they found themselves on the same side as Congress in supporting the Calcutta High Court in a dispute with the Government of India, they showed themselves painfully anxious to disassociate themselves from their unwelcome ally. One Council member objected to the Association's having sought the advice and support of Sir William Wedderburn in the matter, declaring bluntly that it was 'undesirable that the Association should in any way be mixed up with the Congress, with which Sir William Wedderburn was identified'. The reply pointed out that the difficulty resided

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 22.4.1898, 117.

2. There was thus a sharp contrast with the way in which the Indians had watched, analysed and heeded the Ilbert Bill agitation and its lessons.

3. Article (unsigned) "If it be real - what does it mean?" in Pioneer Mail 17.12.1884. As Martin 21-2 notes, Ripon's Finance Member Colvin later admitted to its authorship.

4. See report of the Dinner's speeches in Englishman 1.12.1888.

5. Defence Association letter to the Eurasian and Anglo-Indian Association, Calcutta, 17.12.1888, given in EAIDA Report 1888, 42-3.

in the fact that Congress on this issue took the same line as the Association - 'and the Association, though it did not wish to be mixed up with the Congress at all, could not well refuse to move against anything in itself objectionable merely because the Congress had also moved against it'. That agreed, care was needed, it was felt, 'not to be strengthening the Congress by moving in its wake'.[1] The response to the apparition of Congress as a major rival pressure group was thus either to draw aside, rather ostentatiously, or to hope that by ignoring it for long enough this irritating 'microscopic minority' would fade away. But, despite an avowed policy of 'continuous watchfulness in the year of quiet',[2] there was never any readiness to study its resolutions, note the reasons for its growth, or treat it seriously. Instead the Association chose to fix its attention - and demand that of the Bengal Government - on important issues such as the 'grossly obscene and insulting language to a lady' used by a native servant who had only been 'punished with a small fine, instead of being imprisoned'. Such conduct the Defence Association declared was 'generally regarded as criminal in a high degree' and Government's unsatisfactory reply to the Council's plea for mixed benches in such cases appeared to the Council to reflect the Administration's inability 'to realise the gravity of the question'.[3]

The Defence Association, thus disclaiming interest in the wider field of national politics, continued to attend to miscellaneous minor issues, which were frequently strictly community ones. It lent its support to the various commercial associations' opposition to Income Tax, raised complaints about the inadequate accommodation for European invalids in Calcutta's Presidency General Hospital and voiced concern lest the North-Western Provinces Courts of Ward Act might injure planters with interests in estates brought under its operations.[4] It joined with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in objecting to the closure of the Calcutta Mint, expressed a distant sympathy with the tea planters

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1. EAIDA Cl. progs. 30.6.1893, No. IV.
2. EAIDA Report 1897, 3.
3. Ibid. 1899, 4.
4. EAIDA Reports 1891, 1896, 1899.

of Assam in their brushes with the Chief Commissioner, Cotton,[1] and brought under its consideration the value of maintaining a training ship on the Hooghly for poor European and Eurasian lads.[2] On court jurisdiction questions it reacted sharply to executive interference with a judicial decision in the Manbhum coal mine lease case[3] - the Association always saw the judiciary as allies against Government - and it supported the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in pressing for an enlargement of the overloaded Calcutta High Court bench.[4] The record was one of steady activity, but principally over minor, almost parochial issues. Only in the case of opposition to Income Tax measures, and in requiring Government assurances about measures to secure the safety of Europeans and Anglo-Indians in the Muslim riots of 1897 in Calcutta and in the riots sparked off in Western India at this time by Government plague measures did it take up issues of all-India spread.[5]

The one field in which issues were thrown up which could excite and unite the whole community was the legal one. Wilson in his presidential address on 20 June 1889 had laid down that 'the main business of the Association is to guard the legal interests of Europeans, and to secure them in the lawful enjoyment of their rights' - and this remained the core of the Association's work, as the first place in importance given to it in the EAIDA Circular of 1895 re-emphasised.[6] The sort of case taken up was typically that of conflict between a European and a Native and the issue of jury trial under the terms of the Concordat of 1883.

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1. Both subjects are discussed further in chapter IV below.

2. EAIDA Reports 1898, 3, 27-9; 1901, 4; 1902, 4, 5, 26-36.

3. The Deputy Commissioner of Manbhum, H.F.T. Maguire, - who was the District Magistrate as well as the District Collector, and in the latter capacity Manager of the estate of the Raja of Katras - had in his capacity as Manager granted a mining lease on the estate to Messrs Bird & Co. When however a Sub-divisional Magistrate upheld the existing mining rights in the estate of the East India Coal Company against Bird & Co., Maguire as District Magistrate over-ruled the lesser Magistrate's decision and transferred him elsewhere.

4. EAIDA Reports 1899, 1900, 1901.

5. Ibid. 1897, 8, 9, 42-3 and President's remarks at the Association's AGM 16.3.1898.

6. Indian Daily News 21.6.1889, EAIDA Report 1895, 36.

In 1891 it was that of A. Sonnenschein, at Asansol, charged with the death by drowning of an Indian sent into a 'tank' to retrieve a game bird, or in 1894, that of Captain-Surgeon A. Pearce, who had shot a Native whilst out on a dove-shooting party with friends in the Fulta area, whilst in 1897 there was protest to Government at the inadequate sentence passed on Natives who had severely assaulted an Assam tea garden manager, G. Forbes, whose open drain was allegedly injuring their crops.[1] At the opening of the twentieth century it was another such case, but one which involved the far wider issue - dormant since 1896 - of the sanctuary of trial by jury, which concerned the Association. This was the case of Horace Lyall, an Assam tea-planter who had ordered the beating of certain coolies from his garden, seriously injuring two of them, when they had threatened to appeal to the local authorities because he refused one of them sick-leave. Brought before a mixed jury of three Europeans and two Indians at Nowgong, in the heart of the tea-planting country, Lyall had been acquitted. But the Nowgong District Magistrate, under the amended Section 307 of the Criminal Procedure Code, had transferred the case to the Calcutta High Court for review. That Court had scarcely been severe - imposing a fine of Rs. 1,000 and one month's imprisonment[2] - but the Association saw that if such a state of affairs was allowed to continue[3] there would be 'a reversal upon the Concordat arrived at between the Government and the European community at the time of the Ilbert Bill'. Accordingly the Defence Association Council contributed to the Lyall Defence Fund opened by the Englishman, addressed the Chief Commissioner of Assam, and twice memorialised the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, (being strongly pressed and supported in the matter by the Indian Tea Association), protesting about the District Magistrate's action, and hinting

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1. EAIDA Report 1891, 4, 55-60; 1894, 7; 1897, 9-10, 49-52, Statesman (weekly) 30.12.1893-30.1.1894.

2. For High Court judgment see Englishman 4.12.1901.

3. As the Defence Association complained in point 23 of its January 1902 memorial on the subject to Curzon, (see EAIDA Report 1901, 45), 'according to the law as now laid down, a European British subject tried by a jury before an Indian District Magistrate or Sessions Judge, and acquitted, is liable, if the Magistrate or Judge disagrees with the verdict, to be tried again by any two Judges of the High Court, upon the bare record of the case prepared by the Judge or Magistrate'.

that if the terms of the Ilbert Bill Concordat of 1883 were thus overridden, eroding the protection afforded to Europeans, this might 'invite a repetition of the hostility which that controversy occasioned'.[1]

Curzon, who had assumed the governor-generalship of India in January 1899, was not easily to be browbeaten by a group of merchants and planters. If he showed little sympathy with the aspirations and claims of the Congress, he showed even less towards the licence so readily assumed by Europeans in their dealings with Indians. No one defended the rightness and inevitability of British rule in India more firmly than Curzon - or his own fitness to head that administration,[2] even his biographer Ronaldshay admitting the strong element of condescension and pomposity which he coupled with his undoubted brilliant natural gifts[3] - but he had taken his own line at once in demanding a 'strict and inflexible justice between the two races'.[4] Soon after his arrival Curzon ordered a review of such inter-racial cases to see whether justice appeared to have been equitably administered, and the results of the examination of cases in 1900 involving regular 'collisions' between British soldiers and Natives soon established that Ilbert's warning to Ripon that jury trials in cases of Europeans versus Indians would be a mockery, was well founded. 'If the British soldier knocks down a Native', wrote Curzon, 'and he dies of the blow, there is not the slightest chance of his being convicted by any European Jury in this country'.[5] In what was known as the Fort William murder case Curzon found that despite the acknowledged confession by a British soldier that he had shot a native tailor dead, the Coroner's jury returned a unanimous verdict that 'death was caused ... by some person or persons, unknown'. When, notwithstanding, the

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1. EAIDA Report 1901, 4, 29-45 and 1902, 4, 36-41.
2. He had been Under Secretary of State for India in 1891-2 and later for Foreign Affairs.
3. Earl of Ronaldshay, The Life of Lord Curzon, I, 294, 304.
4. Curzon to Hamilton 23.9.1903, Curzon C. MSS.Eur.F.111/162, 333.
5. Curzon to Hamilton 15.2.1900, ibid. MSS.Eur.F.111/159, 43.

magistrate committed the prisoner for trial to the High Court, the accused, in the face of clear evidence to the contrary, suddenly entered a plea of insanity. This was readily accepted by the High Court judge who ordered the prisoner's transfer to the jail hospital. Later the soldier was reported sane, and was required to stand trial again, 'but' wrote the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, 'I will gladly lay 10 to 1 that, on some plea or other, he will be acquitted'.[1] Racial spirit Curzon saw was at the root of the trouble:[2] 'there is no justice in this country in cases where Europeans and Natives are concerned'.[3]

Curzon proceeded therefore to appeal against 'unsatisfactory' court verdicts in such inter-racial cases, incurring much unpopularity among the non-official Europeans as a result. In the Lyall case in point where the original acquittal had been challenged Curzon refused to be intimidated by the Association's remonstrances of December 1901 and January 1902, replying that Government felt itself 'unable to interfere' with the sentence passed by the High Court, and stating emphatically that cases where the High Court felt obliged to overrule the decisions of a jury where circumstances so warranted[4] were not 'novel and dangerous' as the Defence Association had claimed, but in full accord with a jurisdictional doctrine clearly established since the 1870's.[5] The Association, its bluff called, summoned no public meetings, and raised no general clamour either in India or

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1. Curzon to Hamilton 15.8.1900, ibid., 231 and to Hamilton 1.4.1901. Curzon C. MSS.Eur.F.111/160, 87.

2. See also article by M.N. Das, 'Lord Curzon and the Problem of European Racialism in India', in Journal of Indian History April 1961, XXXIX, No. 115, 163-8. A typical European non-official view was expressed in a letter by S.J. Hill which appeared in the Pioneer (8.9.1901), expressing the view that a nominal fine would have been quite sufficient punishment inflicted on two European planters of Travancore tried that August in Madras for murdering a native groom.

3. Curzon to Hamilton 15.8.1900, Curzon C. MSS.Eur.F.111/159, 239.

4. Not just thus 'in cases of perversity and of manifest or unreasonable error' to which procedure the EAIDA was now prepared to accede.

5. Home Department letter 3.1.1902 to Assam Chief Commissioner, and 1.9.1902 to Bengal Government, given in EAIDA Report 1901, 40 and ibid. 1902, 36-40.

England, but contented itself with a letter to Government in February 1903 containing an 'expression of deep regret'.[1]

The issue, however, was one central to the purposes of the Association. When in 1903 the Government saw fit to appeal (and successfully at that) against the acquittal of a Raneegunge colliery manager Henry Martin who had killed a Native in 'self-defence'[2] the community was up in arms again. The more serious Bain case of that same year aroused India's non-official Europeans to even deeper fury against Curzon and his 'mistaken' policy, the Defence Association joining with European commercial bodies in memorializing the Government against this latest executive interference with the judiciary.[3] Peter Bain, an Assam tea plantation manager, who had seized an absconding coolie and beaten him till the man died,[4] was found guilty by a local jury of Europeans of 'simple hurt' only and sentenced to six months' simple imprisonment. Appalled at the 'scandalous miscarriage of justice' Curzon ordered the case to be appealed before the Calcutta High Court. There, however, Mr. Justice Sale, 'to the delight of the planters' party in Calcutta', handed down his opinion that there was no case to go before the jury, already empannelled, - whereupon Mr. Pugh, the acting Advocate-General, (but a past President of the Association), 'for fear of incurring unpopularity among his English friends ... caved in at once, and entered a nolli prosequi'.[5] Curzon, taken aback by the 'storm of excitement in Calcutta' regarding the case and the 'racial feeling there ... stronger than at any time since the days of the Ilbert

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1. EAIDA Report 1901, 4, 29-45; 1902, 4, 27, 36-41.

2. Ibid. 1903, 4 and report in Friend of India & Statesman, weekly edition, 28.5.1903.

3. EAIDA Report 1903, 30-32, Joint Memorial to Viceroy dated 13.11.1903 signed, in order, by Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta Trades' Association, EAIDA, Indian Tea Association, Indian Jute Mills' and Indian Mining Associations, and eight commercial associations under the auspices of the Bengal Chamber.

4. Friend of India & Statesman, weekly edition, 9.7.1903. Bain additionally had abetted in the whipping of the coolie's wife and niece who had absconded with him.

5. The Englishman 1.9.1903 recorded the 'extraordinary scene in court'. In his non-official capacity Pugh had earlier defended Lyall.

Bill', fumed.[1] By contrast, the Defence Association, well pleased with the role in the case played by its former President and long time support Pugh, gladly contributed 1,000 rupees to the Bain legal defence fund set up by the Englishman.[2]

So ended on a victory note the first twenty years of the Defence Association's existence, with a Viceroy, as in 1883, sitting up and taking 'proper notice' of European non-official opinion 'as he ought'. But, in marked contrast to the predominant role of the EAIDA in the Ilbert Bill affair, even here, in an important legal case in the very area which the Association saw as its main theatre of operation, one moreover in which it had the legal expertise to take the lead, the Association had been content to appear yet again in the role of a mere supporter of the Bengal Chamber and other European commercial associations. 'While Congress fixed its course politically within its first few years',[3] and whilst the Muslims, having remained rather aloof from Congress through Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's influence, had formed a rival United Indian Patriotic Association in 1888 and then five years later a Defence Association of their own,[4] the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association, notwithstanding the pride of place given to political objects in its Prospectus, continued to concentrate upon narrow a-political issues. With no more than about two hundred members it made routine appeals for more members,[5] but with its chosen posture of 'watching' - but with only partially opened eyes - it could neither attract new support

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1. Curzon to Hamilton 9.9.1903, Curzon C. MSS.Eur.F.111/162, 320-1. Curzon noted - in referring in this letter to British society left in Calcutta after the Indian and Bengal Governments had left for the hills - that the only Englishmen in Calcutta excepting judges and barristers were 'merchants, planters and businessmen, whose knowledge is always of the smallest, who are infected with the strongest race prejudices, and who, at the slightest provocation, go off their heads altogether'.

2. Curzon to Hamilton 16.9.1903, ibid., 325 and EAIDA Report 1903, 4, 7, 30-38 in which there is also mention of three other relevant cases of the period.

3. Observation of Sir Hubert Carr (President of European Association 1922-25), given in J. Comming ed., Political India 1832-1932, 143.

4. Argov 34-5, 61-2, B. Majumdar, Indian Political Associations and Reform of Legislature (1818-1917), ch.XI, and Statesman 30.1.1894 reporting the formation of the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Association of Upper India.

5. See, for example, remarks of Vice President Prophit at annual meeting 29.2.1904 given in EAIDA Report 1903, 47.

nor effectively defend the European community's old political dominance. Indeed it was in true Micawber style that the Chairman at the March 1901 Annual General Meeting declared:[1] 'there is no knowing' when the Defence Association 'may be suddenly called upon to do work of the greatest importance'.

1. 1900 EAIDA Report, 54.

CHAPTER IV

PLANTING, INDUSTRY, TRADE AND COMMERCE

The excitement of the Ilbert Bill drama had brought most of the non-official European community into action and had thrown up a representative organisation, the EAIDA. Once victory had been secured in that campaign, however, the Defence Association, lacking a universal cause, had lost much of its energy and membership, and the community in the years which followed looked in preference to its sectional organisations - old, or newly established - to guard its interests and act on its behalf. By contrast with the steady growth which marked the period down to the start of the 1880's, numbers in the non-official community were now notably stable, hovering from 1881 to 1901 around the 29,000 mark for non-official UK-born British subjects, with another 1,000 British subjects born outside both Britain and India. Other non-official Europeans, including Americans, increased in strength a little, from 8,000 in 1881 to 10,000 in 1901, but the only major growth was of the domiciled British, advancing steadily from 50,000 or so in 1881, to 57,000 in 1891 and 62,000 in 1901.[1] It was to those born in Britain, however, that leadership roles among the non-officials were assigned, whether in industry, planting, commerce, trade or the professions. How they organised and led may usefully be considered under two main heads - activities in the mofussil, predominantly in the planting industries, and in the cities, where business, trade and the professions were the dominant sectors.

'The principal plantation products' as Anstey has noted,[2] were 'tea, coffee, indigo, rubber and cinchona', and it was the third-named of these, indigo, which represented the oldest plantation industry in India. Indians

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1. In round figures, total UK-born in India were 89,000, 100,000 and 97,000 for 1881, 1891 and 1901 respectively, but such totals included a civil servant and clerical establishment element estimated at around 3,000 at each census and an army and navy personnel numbering about 57,000, 70,000 and 63,000 for the respective years. The domiciled community totals have been computed by deducting from the European totals in the relevant censuses, the totals applying to UK- and other European born, Americans, Australians and a nominal addition for white Africans. Thus for 1901, by deducting the 97,000 UK-born and 11,000 other Europeans and those in the relevant category born elsewhere from the 170,000 total Europeans the balance of 62,000 produces the domiciled total mentioned. As that year's Census remarked, 'more than one-third of the persons returned as Europeans were born in India'. See Census of India 1881, Report ... British India, I, 224, 468, 470; ibid. 1891, General Report, 177, 179 and General Tables, I, 391-2; and ibid. 1901, India I, 393-4, and I-A India II, 206-7. (The non-official UK-born population was to rise in the next two decades to some 40,000 in 1911 and to around 46,000 in 1921, the totals reflecting an increasing proportion of wives and children.)

2. V. Anstey, The Economic Development of India, 20.

had long cultivated this crop and manufactured the blue dye, but it was L. Bonnaud, a Frenchman, who (probably) in 1778 introduced modern European methods of organisation into Bengal, and the celebrated Tirhoot collector François Grand[1] who was credited with being the European pioneer of the industry in the early 1780's in what became the predominant European planting area, Behar.[2]

What the Europeans introduced was not so much a technological revolution, but a larger scale organisation of indigo planting and more centralised dye production,[3] financed by the agency houses which linked planters with world markets. Their problems, throughout, were two-fold - how to obtain control of the land needed to grow the crop in areas already fully settled, and how to ensure a regular supply of labour - and both problems were exacerbated by the narrow profit margins available, given the rivalry of American and West Indian production. The struggle to control land, as landlords or tenants, and to induce peasants to plant indigo when returns to them were not very good, led from the end of the eighteenth century onwards to periodic outbursts of coercion, affrays, complaint and resistance. In 1810 government attention was drawn to the 'abuses and oppressions' committed by European indigo planters on the ryots who cultivated the indigo for them, and to the organised affrays against other indigo planters.[4] The establishment of a (British) Indigo Planters' Association at Calcutta in 1839 did not by any means put an end to all violent affrays among planters[5] or with local zamindars, their rivals for control of the countryside.[6] Nor did it end the abuses and oppressions of native ryots by the European indigo planters. J.P. Grant, the Bengal Lieutenant-Governor, noted in 1860 that the system of indigo manufacture in Lower Bengal had long been unsound and that the flagrant abuses which had claimed government attention in 1810 still existed.[7] Profit margins were low

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1. His wife, after divorcing him, married the French statesman Talleyrand.

2. J. Houlton, Bihar the Heart of India, 115, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers. Saran., 100. In the South, in Madras, the indigo industry was to remain dominated by Indians.

3. For general studies of indigo planting see Palit and B. Chowdhury, Growth of Commercial Agriculture in Bengal (1757-1900), I, ch. 3.

4. P.P.H.C. 1812-13, VIII, 399.

5. See P.P.H.C. 1842, XXX, 266-306, 'Suppression of Affrays concerning Indigo'.

6. See above, page 2.

7. P.P.H.C. 1861, XLV, 70-1, J.P. Grant Minute 17.12.1860. For one official's summary of indigo troubles around 1860 and the Indigo Commission's Report that year upon which Grant based his Minute see Buckland, I, 184ff., 238ff.

and the industry was largely sustained as part of the mechanism for the remittance of the Indian Government's Home Charges. It was the knowledge that some officials, like Grant and Ashley Eden, the District Magistrate of Baraset, were sympathetic to their cause, which led to widespread disturbances by indigo ryots in Lower Bengal at this time. And though the Indigo Commission appointed in 1860 soothed matters over, in Lower Bengal the resentful ryots largely held off from cultivating indigo for Europeans and a 'marked decline' of the industry in the area set in.[1]

In the Behar area, by contrast, the industry was progressing, especially so from around 1850 when the high prices of indigo had led the European planters to abandon sugar-cane cultivation in favour of indigo. From a combined total of 86 sugar and indigo concerns in the Tirhut region of Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga in 1850, numbers advanced by 1874 to 126 factories and outworks engaged on indigo alone, with the Pandaul concern in Darbhanga, the largest concern in India, occupying an area of 300 square miles.[2] By the start of the next decade, of around 200 British-born indigo planters then in India, over one half were in Behar, and the rest scattered elsewhere in Bengal and in other north Indian provinces.[3]

But as in Bengal proper, abuses were 'allowed to grow up in connection with indigo cultivation in Behar', as the Patna Commissioner reported in 1877, which 'involved an amount of lawlessness and oppression, principally in the shape of extorted agreements to cultivate and of seizure of ploughs and cattle, which could not be tolerated'. Government, disinclined to do anything which would 'unduly excite the minds of the ryots' or further embitter ryot-European planter relationships, stayed its hand, whilst a number of leading planters who had declared themselves 'sensible of the necessity of reform', undertook the establishment of a planters' association for that purpose.[4] On 21 June 1877

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1. P.P.H.C. 1861, XLV, 3, petition of Bengal Indigo Planters' Association to Viceroy, (the petition requested orders to be issued preventing the Bengal Lieutenant-Governor, who supported Eden, from interfering in indigo cases in the courts), Bengal Admin. Report 1876-77, 191 and see ibid. 1882-83, 21: 'the indigo industry in the Burdwan district is steadily declining'.

2. Bengal Admin. Report 1876-77, 191, Houlton 116, W.W. Hunter, A Statistical Account of Bengal, XIII, 98, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers, Darbhanga., 98. In the North-Western Provinces area where the indigo industry was also now extending Indian planters were to predominate over Europeans.

3. See Thacker's 1881 giving particulars of residents at indigo concerns.

4. Bengal Admin. Report 1877-78, summary 39. Government was probably anxious to avoid an official clash with the planters, because in Lower Bengal the industry had been 'completely ruined... by the excessive zeal of the official reformers' see Calcutta telegrams in Times 13.6.1877 and 25.6.1877. M. Wilson, History of Behar, 58, notes the preliminary planters' meeting called on 2 April 1877 to consider the proposed formation of an association with George Toomey, T. Fraser, F. Collingridge and R. Wilson playing active roles. Twenty eight indigo concerns had been represented at the meeting.

planters and representatives from the three main Calcutta indigo houses of Messrs Moran, Thomas, and Begg,Dunlop held a general meeting in Muzaffarpur at which the rules of a new association to be called the Behar Indigo Planters' Association,[1] were framed. These rules it was hoped would be acceptable to the Bengal Government.[2] So indeed they proved to be, for Government, recognising the Association's desire to place planter-ryot relationships 'on a more satisfactory footing', declared the new organisation's proposals 'thoroughly satisfactory'. A BIPA meeting at Muzaffarpur on 28 January 1878 accordingly adopted and signed the new strict code of rules, marking the planting body's emergence as an 'accomplished fact'.[3] Some months later, on 17 May, the indigo planter William Brereton Hudson was elected to the (general) secretaryship of the newly formed Planters' Association,[4] a position he was to keep till 1889.[5]

The Association attracted and seemingly sought little of the limelight in its early years - indeed in 1894 the Pioneer was to comment that it was 'a society that does not consider it necessary to be reminding the public of its existence in season and out of season'[6] - and it was only when the Ilbert Bill seemed to threaten to disturb the relationship with government established in 1877 that it stirred into public activity. The BIPA did then organise a number of well publicised meetings, those in March at Muzaffarpur and elsewhere being particularly notable. Hudson's August letter, the later vociferous and sharp tempered meetings, and the active presence of the Behar Mounted Rifles in Calcutta in December all added considerable strength to the opposition to the Bill.[7]

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1. It had commenced under the style "The Indigo Planters' Association", see Wilson, 59.

2. Times 13.6.1877, Homeward Mail 30.7.1877, Indian Daily News 21.6.1877. The new association (BIPA) had its headquarters at Muzaffarpur. For some further details on its formation in 1877 see BIPA memorial in Englishman 27.1.1885 and Wilson, 57-60.

3. Bengal Admin. Report 1877-78, summary, 39, Englishman 7.2.1878. The rules presumably aimed at curbing planters' excesses against the ryots and regulated conduct between members, see example of arbitration in cases of land conflicts between European indigo interests in Indian Planters' Gazette 27.2.1896 and in L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers. Muzaffarpur., 102.

4. Despite extensive enquiries and a personal search made in Behar in 1975 the records of the Indigo Planters' Association, known to have been in existence till the mid-1940's, have not been located, and may well have been discarded. The activities of this Association for the period have therefore been reconstructed from other, fragmentary sources.

5. Indian Planters' Gazette, 28.1.1893, and Wilson, 60. The latter notes that Fraser and Toomey had been Honorary Secretaries of the Association at its start.

6. Pioneer 24.2.1894. Even in the Indian Planters' Gazette, which featured an indigo section, reporting was sparse in the extreme. See for example the 'report' of a BIPA meeting in this paper 2.4.1898 noting 45 members present and then concluding 'Mr. Filgate made some very pertinent remarks, and the Secretary was excessively amusing, so was Mr. C. Hay-Webb'.

7. See Chapter II above.

The concurrent Bengal Tenancy (or Rent) Bill question did not provide an issue as clear cut as that of the Ilbert Bill. As the Bengal Administration Report of 1877-78 had noted, the most important reform affecting indigo planting, one only to be dealt with by legislation, and so outside the government-planters agreement, was 'some measure for giving the ryot greater security of tenure'.[1] When however the Bengal Tenancy Bill, introduced in early 1883, grappled with the issue it was seen to be a very complex one for planters. As T.M. Gibbon, who was watching European indigo planters' interests in the Indian Legislative Council, explained to BIPA, it was not simple to watch over such manifold interests when planters were acting not only as traders but in some cases as ryots and in others as zamindars![2] In the circumstances the BIPA Rent Bill memorial presented to the Viceroy at the end of January 1885 by a deputation consisting of Secretary Hudson, Gibbon and five leading indigo planters confined itself to objecting to the Bill as traders, and pleaded for the legalising of the transferability of the ryots' occupancy rights in their holdings, in the interests of greater trade security.[3]

At a BIPA general meeting held at the Planters Club, Muzaffarpur on 3 October 1885 the need to keep a watchful eye over the proposed Behar Cadastral Survey and the accompanying Patwari Bill was noted. The purpose of these had been set out in January 1885 by A.P. MacDonnell, the Revenue Department Secretary, in the Bengal Legislative Council. 'One of the most salutary provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Bill is that one which contemplates a cadastral survey and record of rights wherever the relations between landlord and tenant are strained or unsatisfactory', and he indicated that Government proposed as an experimental measure to institute such a survey and record of rights in Behar. He also declared, 'if we carry these plans into effect ... we ... deem it essential to establish a competent agency to maintain the record in a correct and useful condition' - whence the proposal to create a new government official, the munserim-patwari. These officials were 'to be Government servants, and no longer directly controlled by the zamindar ... altogether severed from the collection of rent, and restricted to the registration and maintenance of the

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1. Bengal Admin. Report 1877-78, summary, 39.

2. Allen's Indian Mail 11.9.1883, Englishman 27.1.1885. Gibbon had achieved prominence as manager of the Bettiah Raj, a position to which he had been appointed following its financial crisis in 1876.

3. Englishman 27.1.1885. Along with (W.B.) Hudson and Gibbon, the deputation comprised G. Toomey, R.H. Hudson, W. Macleod, W. Spry and H. Collingridge. General references to Hudson in this work refer to W.B. Hudson and not R.H. Hudson, his brother.

village accounts'. Macdonnell stressed that though government servants, they were 'to be paid by the parties interested in the lands of which they keep the accounts'.[1] The BIPA was never happy at government intervention - and the cadastral survey was intended to deal with unsatisfactory landlord-tenant relations, by setting basic rents which would hold good for fifteen years wherever the area surveyed was found not to accord with the existing land record, or jamabandi.[2] The cost involved, their own uncertain status as zamindars, or as subordinate landholders or as tenants, all caused alarm, and the 3 October meeting expressed lingering concern about the Patwari Bill, despite some changes having been made in accordance with their representations.[3] A further BIPA meeting (Muzaffarpur branch) in March 1886 criticised the extensive and readily abusable powers given to the new patwaris, the excessive imposed costs for no corresponding advantage, and the discretion given to the Local Government to act without consulting the Association on the rules it might frame.[4] Opposition to the Patwari Bill was kept up at the BIPA district branch meetings at Motihari, Chapra and Muzaffarpur in May and June following, with the meetings firmly endorsing Hudson's sentiments against Government 'letting loose this fresh horde of ill-paid professional blood suckers [the munserims] on the agricultural community'.[5] The matter ceased to be a live issue, however, when for financial reasons Government in late 1886 temporarily abandoned the cadastral survey successfully initiated in Muzaffarpur in 1885, an action which necessarily resulted in the dependent Patwari Bill on its part being left in abeyance.[6]

The indigo planters of course were thankful to be so left alone by Government and utilised the occasion of a visit to Muzaffarpur in January 1888 of Sir Steuart Bayley - successor to Rivers Thompson as Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal[7] - to stress the existing tranquil planter-ryot relations. As the BIPA

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1. Bengal Leg.Cl.progs. 31.1.1885, XVII, 7, 17, ibid. 14.2.1885.

2. Indian Planters' Gazette, 20.10.1885.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., 13.4.1886.

5. Indian Planters' Gazette, 27.7.1886. Attendance at the three meetings was Motihari - 7, Chapra - 12, Muzaffarpur - 11 - some indication of the many 'passengers' in the branches, where affairs were handled by their Honorary Secretaries and Chairmen plus perhaps a small committee.

6. Bengal Leg.Cl. progs. 27.11.1886, XVIII, 102.

7. Thompson retired in the spring of 1887, and the Behar planters, who well remembered his strong support of the non-official cause in the Ilbert Bill fight, sent grateful farewell greetings to his public dinner of honour, see Englishman, 18.3.1887.

deputation emphasised,[1] the existing tranquillity compared favourably with the position in 1877 and bore out the wisdom of Government in having trusted BIPA to impose its own gradual reforms without interference. Bayley acknowledged the Association's moral pressure on those individuals who were 'unwilling to sacrifice selfish ends for the general good' though he pointedly commented that 'the improvements in the system ... were neither so complete nor so universal as could be wished'.[2] In the following year, 1889, Hudson resigned from the secretaryship of BIPA and from his mofussil membership of the Defence Association Council to concentrate on running the Seeraha indigo concern in Champaran which he had just acquired. At the request however of both Government and the indigo planting community, Hudson retained his connection with BIPA as its President.[3] Hudson's place as BIPA General Secretary was taken, in an easy election victory, by Edmund Ross Macnaghten, who had come out to India in 1863 and had been connected with indigo for going on for thirty years.[4]

The change over of Secretaries took place at the time when Government was preparing to renew the Behar survey and settlement operations under the Bengal Tenancy Act. Delayed from 1889 because of a crop failure in Behar preliminary survey operations were recommenced in December 1891 and the cadastral survey itself from October 1892 against a background of opposition.[5] Concurrently land record legislation was again under review in 1892 and 1893 and Macnaghten on behalf of BIPA, and Gibbon from the Bettiah Raj, were present at a General Conference with officials in January 1894 to discuss a new Bill on the subject. (A BIPA memorial in August 1893 had shown the Association prepared to consider a record maintenance scheme which would keep down interference and expense.)[6] The draft Bill was approved by the meeting with minor alterations, and in due course was introduced into the Bengal Legislative Council in January 1895 and passed in

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1. The deputation represented planters in the districts of Muzaffarpur, Champaran, Chapra and Darbhanga.

2. Englishman, 1.2.1888. The BIPA district associations which dealt with local interest affairs, supported the headquarters' line on main policy issues though some flexibility seemed to be allowed in fixing local standard wages and service rates paid.

3. Indian Planters' Gazette, 28.1.1893, EAIDA Reports 1889, 1890, lists of Council.

4. See Indian Planters' Gazette, 11.2.1905. Macnaghten had frequently acted for Hudson in late years and had achieved much popularity both through the 'right royal hospitality' which he dispensed at the Begum Serei concern that he managed, and through bringing his foxhounds - the first seen in Behar - to the Muzaffarpur meets for the enjoyment of other planters.

5. Some leading indigo planters had participated with zaminders and others at a Muzaffarpur meeting in March 1892 at which the local Commission sought to allay non-official worries about the survey.

6. C.J. Stephenson-Moore, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Muzaffarpur District, 1892 to 1899., 123.

final form into law that spring as The Land Records Maintenance Act, 1895, (Bengal Act III of 1895). In accordance with powers given under the Act five sixteenths of the cost of the North Behar Survey and Settlement was allocated to the ryots, and seven sixteenths to the zamindars (including tenure-holders of a proprietary character), whilst Government itself bore the remaining quarter.[1]

During the investigations made in connection with the Behar survey and settlement operations in the decade or so from 1892, it became clear why the indigo planters had objected to too close a government look into ryotwari affairs and why indeed they had so determinedly shunned any limelight down the years. If planter-ryot relations were tranquil as compared with 1877 - or the early 1860's, this was far from implying that they were good. As Stevenson-Moore, the author of the Muzaffarpur Final Settlement Report was forced to comment: 'the cultivation of this [indigo] crop is not in the rayats' view popular'.[2] Had he used less diplomatic restraint he might well have said that the ryots hated indigo planting and the practices by which it had come to be organised.

Three main systems of indigo cultivation were still in force in the 1890's, namely the ziraat system of direct cultivation on factory occupied land using the factory's hired labour, the asamiwar system of cultivation through factory tenants, and a voluntary agreement system utilising the services of independent ryots and known generally in Behar as the khushki system. (This last system was little favoured by Europeans in Behar, since higher prices had to be paid to the independent ryot - whence the little European interest in indigo in Madras where the ryotwari land system was in vogue.)[3] The pay of native hired labour working on factory lands was of course low, but it was the tied indigo ryot working under the asamiwar system who fared worst of all. Being an indigo factory tenant he was rarely able to refuse the indigo satta, a document which required him, in consideration of a cash advance, to grow indigo for the factory on a specified portion of his land for a stated number of years at a fixed rate. One such indigo satta noted in the Champaran Final Settlement Report required the ryot, for twenty years, for an advance of a mere Rs.12, to grow indigo for

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1. Buckland, II, 889-901, StMMPr 1889-90, 135.

2. Final Report ... Muzaffarpur District, 1892 to 1899., 352.

3. Bengal ... Gazetteers. Muzaffarpur., 102-3, C.J. Stephenson-Moore, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Champaran District, 1892 to 1899., 152, and Englishman, 19.2.1899 giving extract from Madras Mail. Under the kurtauli or shikmi system, a variation embracing elements from the first two systems mentioned, the factory used its own hired labour to cultivate indigo on land it sublet from a ryot and allowed the ryot to set off rent due to it by the factory from the total rent due from the ryot to the factory as landlord. In the Madras Presidency at this time some 276,000 acres of indigo were under cultivation, see Madras Admin.Report 1894-95, lxxxv. Six years previously the equivalent total had been some 509,000 acres, see ibid. 1888-89, 66.

the factory on the best and specified portion of his land, the ryot to receive for indigo plant delivered to the factory in good time, Rs.16 a bigha in times of good outturn, or Rs.6 if the outturn failed, with a penalty of Rs.48 a bigha on specified land not planted to indigo. For the whole twenty years the payments per bigha were fixed;[1] though as one official noted 'indigo so grown does not pay them so well as ordinary crops', and the ryot was subjected to the harassing supervision of the factory staff.[2] No Gandhi had appeared as yet, however, to speak out on the indigo ryots' behalf, and whilst noting the 'possible' disadvantages and hardships to the ryots of the indigo system in force, officialdom concluded at the end of the nineteenth century that the industry as a whole conferred a very material benefit on the districts in which it operated.[3]

Apart from its main concern of guarding against government and official interference in planter-ryot relationships, BIPA took up the cudgels from time to time on more peripheral matters. In 1886 it was thus the hated Income Tax Act, passed in the spring, which roused BIPA, district branch meetings held at Motihari in Champaran on 25 May and at Chapra and Muzaffarpur on 2 and 10 June - the same meetings at which the Patwari Bill had been opposed - vigorously protesting against indigo planting profits being liable to the tax. Despite correspondence by Hudson with Government, and despite eminent Calcutta legal opinion that right was on the indigo planters' side, the protest was unavailing. A call went out for the BIPA, the ITA and the Defence Association to consult together to bring a test case before the courts, a function falling within the domain of the EAIDA. But Hudson's membership of that body's Council notwithstanding, the EAIDA took no action and, muttering no doubt, the indigo planters had duly to pay up.[4] In 1894, again, the Association busied itself with memorialising the newly appointed Opium Commission on the benefits of opium cultivation, and in urging the Government of India to so regulate cattle slaughter as to spare the feelings of the Hindu community, currently agitated by the cow-killing question.[5] The years in fact were not stirring ones, so that side issues secured undue attention as for example in an election case in 1896, in which an indigo planter, G. Hennessy, was concerned. Hennessy had stood that year for election as a non-

1. Final Report ... Champaran District, 1892-1899., 155-6. In an example of a cart satta given in the same report, 154-5, the ryot in question agreed to put his cart and two stout oxen at the indigo factory's use for twenty years in consideration of an advance of Rs.20 on a monthly interest of 8 annas per cent, with a penalty fine for breach of agreement of one rupee per day. A bigha comprised in Champaran around 1.15 acres.

2. J.H. Kerr, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations in the Darbhanga District, 1896 to 1903., 139.

3. Final Report ... Muzaffarpur District, 1892 to 1899., 355.

4. Indian Planters' Gazette, 27.7., 3.8., 14.9.1886.

5. Indian Planters' Gazette 24.2.1894 and Pioneer 24.2.1894. See also Pioneer 6.3.1894 containing letter from Hudson urging a strong stand by Government in the cow-killing issue.

official representative for the Bhagalpur division to the Bengal Legislative Council only to find, after tie-ing in the voting with an Indian, that the Lieutenant-Governor chose to appoint a complete outsider, a Maharaja, to the vacant Council seat.[1] Local bodies, such as the Motihari Planters' Association, echoed BIPA,[2] and that body in turn while still attentively scrutinizing Government legislation found little to demand action on its part - the Gazette of 1897 rather mockingly reporting, in relation to a BIPA meeting that August, how 'the proposed new salt bill and other matters of import had the earnest attention of the grave and reverend seniors assembled in solemn conclave'.[3] There was wider interest it seemed in the current legal battle over the Bettiah Raj estates between the Maharaja's brother and the Court of Wards acting for the Maharaja's surviving widow, though since the planters had already secured permanent village leases in Champaran from the Bettiah Raj as the price of their financial aid in its crisis of 1876, their position was not affected by the outcome of the case.[4]

These tussles with Government and local business affairs were set against the background of the agreeable social world in which they lived and the occasional pleasure of an official compliment. In 1887, thus, the Behar planters were basking in the reflected glory of having Hudson as the European non-official representative on the Public Service Commission then sitting,[5] and two years later in the honour of the CIE which he was awarded by Government for his services, and yet once more in the Knighthood conferred on him in 1893.[6] By the early 1890's indeed harmonious relations with Government seemed very well established. Charles Elliott, the new Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in succession to Bayley, went out of his way in 1892 to congratulate the Association on being such a 'loyal and useful aid to the District Officers', and stressed his view of it 'as part of the administrative machinery of the province'.[7] Had Sir Henry Norman, ex-Governor of Jamaica and a friend of planters there, accepted the

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1. Indian Planters' Gazette, 4.1.1896.

2. Ibid., 2.1.1897, 13.2.1897.

3. Ibid., 14, 28.8.1897.

4. Ibid. March to December 1897, judgement in Bettiah Raj case in Englishman (weekly summary) 28.7.1897, Houlton 116, and Final Report ... Champaran District, 1892 to 1899., 146.

5. See chapter V below.

6. "Paddy" Hudson - he was Irish - had been Lieutenant-Colonel in command of the Behar Volunteers since 1881, see Kemp, 19. This author notes, 25, the change in the designation of these Volunteers in February 1884 from Behar Mounted Rifles to Behar Light Horse. (For a complete list of Volunteer Corps in India down to the mid-1880's see Indian Planters' Gazette, 27.7.1886.) The Knighthood was conferred following strong recommendations from the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal and the Viceroy, see Lansdowne to Kimberley 26.10.1892, Lansdowne C. MSS. Eur.D. 558/5, 134.

7. Indian Planters' Gazette, 28.1.1893.

Viceroyalty in 1893 in succession to Lansdowne, as BIPA had hoped he would,[1] relations might have been easier still. Even so at a local level rapport was obviously close - witness BIPA's appeal in 1896 to the Bengal Government not to post the District Magistrate R. Lyon outside the planting areas, since such amicable relationships had been established between them.[2] If the reports in the planting Press of the BIPA meetings were by apparent agreement with that body intentionally dismissed, year in year out, with but a brief sentence or two,[3] the papers were thereby enabled to give far fuller attention to the real news - of the Muzaffarpur meet, the inspection of the Volunteers, racing, the assault at arms, the ladies' shooting match, the gymkhana, football, polo and the all-important social balls.[4] The only discordant note heard amidst the harmonious planters' meetings and the popular social round, was that of the indigo planters' assistants, who, denied a say in BIPA affairs, grumbled increasingly at their financial lot.[5]

Soon the whole industry would be so grumbling for in 1882 a synthetic indigo had been produced on a commercial scale.[6] The Indian industry was not initially well organised to resist the onslaught. There had always been some indigo planters who refused to join BIPA - in Muzaffarpur in the 1890's there were 23 member estates and 9 independents, for example.[7] But more important the plantations had been very much at the mercy of the great Calcutta indigo brokers Messrs Moran and Thomas, who had paid too little attention to the interests of the planters in times of crucial exchange rate fluctuations. A number of dissatisfied planters had therefore broken loose from their hold and patronized instead the newly founded Calcutta Indigo Traders' Association - it was estab-

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1. Indian Planters' Gazette, 9.9.1893.

2. Ibid., 25.1.1896, 1.2.1896.

3. The Indian Planters' Gazette 26.1.1895 mentioned attendance, adding merely that 'the business before the meeting was disposed of in about two hours'.

4. For convenience the BIPA annual meetings were held during the winter meet at Muzaffarpur.

5. See letter from 'Rem Rem Rem' in Englishman, 10.2.1883, and Indian Planters' Gazette, 11.1.1896 and 28.8.1897 (the last mentioning suggestions that assistants ought to be paid for famine relief work by contrast with the richer planters who could afford to do it voluntarily for the honour!).

6. Heywood and Company, Limited, The London Produce Market (Mincing Lane), 62.

7. Final Report ... Muzaffarpur District, 1892 to 1899., 339. The BIPA member factories in Muzaffarpur (they included the prominent Kanti, Dhuli, Daudpur, Motipur and Saraiya concerns) employed at the time an average of 35,000 labourers per day and cultivated some 72,000 acres of indigo out of a total European indigo average for the district of around 87,000 see ibid., 340. In the Champaran District 21 indigo factories were BIPA members at this period, among them in the large Bara, Motihari, Pipra and Turkaulia concerns, see Final Report ... Champaran District, 1892 to 1899., 147-8. For detailed histories of the various Behar indigo factories see Wilson, 1-103.

lished in 1890 - shipping their indigo for sale in London rather than Calcutta.[1] In 1893, in a further extension to this movement, a Planters' Selling and Shipping Agency had been formed - 'a severe blow' to Moran and Thomas.[2] This initiative, coupled with keen demand, had secured much higher returns to the planters - Rs.285 a maund as against Rs.175 in the previous season,[3] as well as a forty per cent expansion in exports in 1894-5, (the exports were the highest for many years), as opposed to 1893-4.[4] It was at this point, however, that the Badische Anilin u. Soda Fabric Company in Ludwigshafen began to produce synthetic indigo both cheaply and in quantity, a fierce competitor in the indigo markets of the world. The Indian planters had now to turn their attention to defending rather than to expanding their markets. Thus as the great German Chemical industry began large scale production of synthetic indigo, Indian indigo exports to the American market fell, from 2.4 million lbs. in 1896 to 1.4 million in 1900. By contrast German indigo exports to America in the same years rose from 45,000 to 1.1 million lbs.[5] Both BIPA and the selling agencies were accordingly required to act decisively against the new threat.

Shaken to its foundations by the crisis in the industry, BIPA - suspected of having gone to sleep, thanks to its policy of secrecy[6] - now took pains to publicise the proceedings of its meetings to show what it was doing. At its January 1898 annual meeting, at which Sir William Hudson's resignation as President was announced, resolutions were passed calling for the amalgamation of BIPA with the 'Indigo Defence Association' recently formed in London, and for confirmation of the engagement of the services of the eminent chemist Professor Christopher Rawson as adviser to the Association. Calls were also made for (European) indigo planters outside Behar to join BIPA's ranks, as the North-Western Province's planters now generally did. A follow-up meeting in mid-February 1898 with brokers and buyers present was held to pursue suggestions for improvement raised at the January meeting.[7] In January 1899

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1. Capital, 18.8.1891.

2. Ibid. 1.2.1893.

3. Ibid., The Indian maund approximated to 82 lbs.

4. Bengal Admin.Report 1894-95, 151. The Behar indigo outturn for this year was 92,000 maunds against 21,000 maunds for the declined industry in Lower Bengal.

5. Indian Planters' Gazette, 11.1.1902. See also English translation of the Badische Company's 1900 Annual Report in Capital 16.5.1901.

6. See letter from 'Desirous of Information' (a planter's assistant?) in Indian Planters' Gazette, 29.1.1898.

7. Ibid. 12.2.1898-5.3.1898. The London Association referred to was presumably the London Indigo Association whose offices were at 38, Mincing Lane and whose aim was to boost the trade in natural indigo against its 'quite unsuitable ... substitute', see letter from that body in ibid. 11.2.1899.

a BIPA delegation called on Sir John Woodburn the Bengal Lieutenant-Governor then visiting the Muzaffarpur area, for Government assistance.[1] By 1900 with the crisis deepening and no solution propounded by Professor Rawson on the scientific side there was an acrimonious annual general meeting of the Association at which sharp criticism was raised at Secretary Macnaghten's way of handling matters. (The pride felt at the Behar Volunteer contingent going out to the Boer War in Africa with Colonel Lumsden's regiment scarcely relieved the general gloom.)[2] In 1901, with the depression continuing, an Indigo Improvement Syndicate, recently formed at Calcutta, urged at its 5 January meeting that the agro-scientific work being done for its members by E.A. Hancock and B. Coventry, one a chemist, the other an innovatory planter, should be combined with the experiments which Rawson was conducting for BIPA. More rapid results would surely be achieved if all these experts co-operated - and indeed if the Syndicate and BIPA themselves should merge.[3] Fifteen days later the BIPA annual meeting at Muzaffarpur brought forward a proposal for an indigo industry 'mass meeting' at Calcutta, which took place on 20 February with W.L. Thomas presiding. It was in effect a Syndicate meeting attended by a representative committee from BIPA led by Macnaghten, at which a resolution was passed appointing a joint BIPA-Syndicate delegation to wait on the Bengal Lieutenant-Governor to solicit financial assistance to the industry, thus following up applications both associations had previously made to him separately. The two meetings of the delegation with the Lieutenant-Governor, between 20 and 23 February, and the amalgamation of BIPA with the Syndicate did provoke the Bengal Government to show practical sympathy by increasing the small Rs. 7,500 a year grant made in 1900 to a larger annual agricultural research and development grant of Rs. 50,000 for three years from April 1901. Six years later the half-lakh grant was still being continued.[4]

Notwithstanding this government assistance, hope of some major magic

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1. Ibid. 4.2.1899. In 1900 a grant of Rs. 7,500 per annum was made to BIPA for the services of a bacteriologist.

2. Indian Planters' Gazette, 1.4.1899 and January to April 1900, and see H.H.S. Pearse, The History of Lumsden's Horse. As Lumsden had been an officer in the Assam Valley Light Horse, Volunteers from the Assam and Surma Valley tea planting areas strongly supported the new regiment, see W.H.S. Wood, Through Fifty Years, 32.

3. Indian Planters' Gazette, 12.1.1901. The meeting was chaired by G.H. Sutherland of Begg, Dunlop & Co. The suggestion by a main speaker, (J.Karpeles an important Calcutta commission agent), that the Syndicate should dissolve and transfer its assets to a new agricultural company which would have not one, but several, experimental stations, was rejected.

4. Indian Planters' Gazette, 23.2.1901 and 13.4.1901 reporting Bengal Government letter of 27.3.1901 to BIPA, and Bengal Admin. Report 1906-07, 69.

cure emanating from agricultural experts' researches was not answered. It was a lame indigo industry indeed that BIPA represented after 1901. 'Sick of indigo and its prices' many indigo planters looked hopefully to sugar as a substitute, encouraged especially by the Sugar Commission's Report, which stressed that the future of indigo was precarious, whilst sugar seemed a profitable proposition. By 1902 the pioneering India Development Company was erecting extensive sugar plants at Pipra and other places in Behar.[1] At the January 1904 BIPA annual meeting 'the question of introducing cotton into these districts was discussed', and rhea was another crop given some consideration.[2] With Behar's annual indigo outturn having fallen to a paltry 26,000 maunds, and Lower Bengal's to a scarcely visible 5,000 - the smallest crop on record as the 1902-03 Bengal Administration Report noted,[3] 'no one with ears to hear and eyes to see /could/ fail to recognise' as Capital soberly remarked,[4] 'that King indigo has been dethroned'. The death on 28 January 1905 of Edmund Macnaghten the BIPA General Secretary served to symbolise the virtual end of an indigo planting era. Only four years later O'Malley could record in the Monghyr Gazetteer, 'the number of ruined factory buildings which one sees ... is a melancholy sight'.[5]

The second principal planting industry in India was that of tea, which, in the north of the country where it was overwhelmingly grown, was to fall from the 1880's under the organisational domination of the Indian Tea Association in Calcutta. Tea cultivation in India had been first encouraged nearly a century earlier by a memoir of the naturalist Sir Joseph Banks in 1788,[6] and between 1819 and 1827 the idea was pressed again by David Scott, Agent to the Governor-General in Assam, and by the botanist Dr J.F. Royle. Finally doubt about the future security of supplies from China led the Government of India to set up a Tea Committee in 1834 to import and cultivate

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1. Indian Planters' Gazette, 2.2.1901, 2.3.1901 (giving text of Sugar Commission Report), and Capital 13. and 27.2.1902. (An Indian Sugar Producers' Association was to be established at Cawnpore in 1912.)

2. Indian Planters' Gazette, 30.1.1904, 13.2.1904.

3. Bengal Admin. Report 1902-03, 67. It was a far cry indeed from the 1893-4 outturn!

4. Capital, 13.2.1902.

5. Indian Planters' Gazette, 11.2.1905, L.S.S. O'Malley, Bengal District Gazetteers. Monghyr., 141.

6. Literature on the historical development of India's tea industry is extensive, but best summarised in P. Griffiths, The History of the Indian Tea Industry, and in the relevant sections of the two-volumed work by W.H. Ukers, All About Tea.

the Chinese tea plant in India. In the following year this Committee seized with pleasure upon news that an indigenous tea plant had been found in Assam - discovered by the Bruce brothers around a decade earlier and again in 1831 by Lieutenant A. Charlton - and as a consequence Government set up experimental tea nurseries in Assam under C.A. Bruce. Soon after, the successful auctioning of the first eight chests of indigenous Assam tea at Mincing Lane, London in January 1839[1] marked a turning point for the industry. Tea from the British Empire was henceforth 'no longer a dream but a reality'.[2] A reality moreover which led in time to the abandonment of the import of tea seed, plants and skilled labour from China.[3] Other experimental tea plantations were established by Government elsewhere in northern India.[4]

As these succeeded they gave way to private enterprise, as they had done in Assam where the Assam Tea Company on hearing the success of the first tea auction took over the East India Company's plantations.[5] Results from working these early Assam plantations - which were badly sited, usually at the places where the indigenous plant had been located - were not encouraging. But with experience and improved cultivation methods the Assam Company commenced from the late 1840's to be profitable, whereupon other tea pioneers followed, first the individuals, notably Lieutenant-Colonel F.S. Hannay and George Williamson, and then in 1859 the Jorehaut Tea Company.[6]

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1. Empire Tea Centenary Committee, Century of the Empire Tea Industry, 4, 5, gives a description of the auction.

2. W.H. Ukers, The Romance of Tea, 37-9, Griffiths, 33-43, and Empire ... Committee, 12. Tea imports from India into Britain which commenced competing against similar imports from China, were to eventually first exceed the latter in 1888-9, see ITA Report, 1895, 256.

3. Not surprisingly, the cultivation in India of China tea or a hybrid China-Indian tea fell away and became commercially insignificant, see Ukers, I, 139-44.

4. In Kumaon, Darjeeling, Dehra Dun, Kangra and Chittagong between 1835 and 1850, and in Cachar, Sylhet, Chota Nagpur, Goalpara and the Terai by 1865. See G.Chand, Tea Industry in the Punjab; Indian Tea Gazette, The Tea Cyclopaedia, 245-62; and C.R. Harler, The Culture and Marketing of Tea, chs. IX, XIV. A.T.McGowan, Tea Planting in the Outer Himalaya, describes such an experimental garden, in Kangra, in 1859-60. Though China tea plants were sent to various southern India districts in 1835 and some experimental planting resulted, this was largely unsuccessful.

5. Griffiths, 61-2. The East India Company which had to wind up and cease its trading operations in India as a result of the 1833 Charter handed over control of nearly all its tea gardens to the Assam Company in 1840 and disposed of the remainder to a Chinaman in 1849, who in turn quickly resold them to James Warren one of the founders of the Assam Company, see ibid., 63, 69.

6. For histories of the Jorehaut and Assam Companies see H.A. Antrobus, A History of the Jorehaut Tea Company Ltd. 1859-1946 and, by the same author, A History of the Assam Company 1839-1953.

The clear success of the Assam and Jorehaut Companies meant that 'the four years from 1861 to 1864 were periods of enormous speculation in Assam', with 'the ill-considered and hurried formation ... and ... extension of plantations' under men usually possessing little practical knowledge or experience'. A crash followed in 1865 'confidently predicted by all whose opinions were worth anything'.[1] But the Assam region recovered from the crisis, and careful management by those interested in tea cultivation and not mere speculation brought prosperity back to the industry in the 'seventies. Tea planting established itself in other parts of India too, building upon government experimentation. Nevertheless of the total Indian tea output in 1879 of 40,000,000 lbs, Cachar, Sylhet and the remainder of Assam produced 31,000,000, with Bengal a lesser 6,000,000 and the North-Western Provinces the Punjab and South India a still smaller 700,000 lbs apiece, and Burma turning out the balance of 17,000 lbs.[2]

This opening out and development in the industry had followed a general pattern. Individual entrepreneurs in India and Britain saw and seized the opportunities in the planting field. So did East India Company officials and officers[3] whose local knowledge and status could be combined with the commercial skills of the non-official in promoting and directing the new tea enterprises. These were still small scale, with individual planters or partners prospecting for good waste land, applying to Government to purchase or lease it[4] - in 1861-62 at Darjeeling 'every acre of culturable land in the district has been applied for'[5] - attending to surveying and demarcating their jungle lots[6] and then setting about their clearance using

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1. Heywood and Company, Limited, 19.

2. The Tea Cyclopaedia, 265-7. By comparison Ceylon's tea industry which had begun in 1840, and where the first private commercial planting had started in 1867, had some 9,000 acres under tea cultivation in 1880 and had tea exports that year of 162,000 lbs. See D.M. Forrest, A Hundred Years of Ceylon Tea 1867-1967, xi, 289-90, and Ukers, I, 177. By 1900, however, the tea-planted area of Ceylon had jumped to 384,000 acres and its tea exports that year were 149,000,000 lbs.

3. See McGowan, 31.

4. In the case of sales, which were permitted for fifteen years from 1861 in place of lease grants, the particular lot was put up for auction, and a rival intended purchaser could thus force up the price. 'Gentlemen's agreements', however, very likely took place.

5. StMMPr 1861-62, 310. For a brief review of the waste land grant system as in practice in Assam, see E.Gait, A History of Assam, 359-60. In the rush for waste land the Indians came a poor second to the British. Though they were prepared to seek grants in tea areas relatively close at hand, where distant areas were concerned they apparently failed to see and to seize the opportunities going.

6. A deposit to cover the cost of survey had to be lodged with the application, but under non-official pressure Government for a time allowed the pre-grant survey to be dispensed with, see J.A. Rahman, Some Aspects of the Indian Viceroyalty of Lord Elgin I, 1862-1863., 400-435.

elephants, local labour or fire. With a bungalow, factory and coolie lines run up the cleared land would be hoed and drained and then sowed or planted, in the second year the carefully tended tea bushes would be pruned and in the third plucking would begin and the plucked crop weighed.[1] The tea was then sun withered, rolled and fermented - machinery introduced was to improve the techniques - and finally dried for grading and packing in chests for shipment.[2] Initially it was a tough and lonely life in a wet wilderness, driving sick coolies when the planter himself was often sick with the same malaria - with beer, a coolie woman and the occasional get together with other planters or the rare visit to the nearest station with its club and masonic activities[3] to make the life supportable.

It was even tougher for the thousands of Indian coolies who cleared the jungle, made the first rough tracks and landing stages and thereafter worked on the made gardens. The recruitment of this labour force - about 12,400 were at work in the Brahmaputra Valley tea gardens in 1860 - had to be from outside sparsely inhabited Assam.[4] As tea planting boomed so Calcutta labour contractors appeared to recruit and transport coolies - the industrious but tractable tribal peoples of Chota Nagpur were preferred - often using unscrupulous methods to satisfy the fierce demand for labour. A Government Committee Enquiry in 1861 stressed the purely commercial attitude of contractors and planters, payment for the commodity being at so much per head for each coolie delivered alive![5] Feeding, medical and sanitary arrangements at the collection depots and on the 'flats' towed slowly up the river were deficient in the extreme, eleven or twelve per cent of the human cargo dying on the journey, and there were many desertions on the way as

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1. The recorded weights served as the basis of coolie commission.

2. T. Kinney, Old Times in Assam, 36-39, M.J. Wright, Three Years in Cachar, 58-62, Griffiths, chs. 32, 33, StMMPr 1880-1, 48. Kinney and Wright give accounts of typical tea garden life in North East India in the 1860's to 1890's, and W.M. Fraser, The Recollections of a Tea Planter, similarly depicts European planting life in the region around the turn of the twentieth century.

3. As The Cyclopedia Publishing Coy., The Cyclopedia of India, II, 111 noted 'In no part of the world is Masonry, in proportion to the European population, so strongly represented as it is in India'.

4. StMMPr 1860-61, Park I, 188-92, /C.A. Elliott/, Report on the Census of Assam for 1881., 29 and Provincial Table B.

5. In cases, furthermore, where delivery was effected before embarking, contractors had ample opportunity of substituting feeble and sickly persons for those accepted, as was pointed out.

coolies saw the truth behind the bright pictures of the contractors.[1] There was also much 'poaching' of labour, especially experienced contract-expired men between plantations.[2] Labour was thus a severe problem to the industry as a whole and to individual planters on the gardens in the pioneering decades.

By the late eighteen-seventies, however, the industry in north India was both more stable and more organised. The 8,000 acres under tea in 1859 and 25,000 in 1869 had grown to 154,000 acres in 1880.[3] Successful pioneers had drawn up development and operating budgets, attracted prominent personalities to a board of directors, and issued enticing prospectuses.[4] The four public companies, twenty private companies and thirty eight individual proprietors (seventeen of them Indian) of 1861, growing tea in Assam[5] had by 1892, in India, vastly expanded to include London registered companies with a capital of £5.1 million controlling 108,000 acres of tea garden,[6] Calcutta companies with £3.6 million and 55,000 acres as well as some £5 million privately invested.[7] The thirty 'principal' Indian tea companies alone registered in

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1. See Report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the system of Cooly Emigration to Assam and Cachar included with papers concerning Bengal Act III of 1863 given in Bengal Bills Objects & Reasons 1862 to 1864. Some children were also sent up with the adult labourers to the tea districts. Thus out of the 1884 Indians consigned by T.H.Bennertz the chief European contractor on country boats in the thirteen months to February 1862, there were 1,133 men, 397 women (a higher than usual proportion), 196 boys, 111 girls and 47 infants. For commission purposes infants were ignored and two children counted as one adult. Of the 1,683½ adults so consigned, 97½ absconded and 59 died on the way. The Committee found the chief European contractor less to blame than Indian contractors.

2. There were no doubt also cases of gardens taking on labourers, without too many questions asked, whom they (rightly) suspected of being runaway coolies from other gardens whose contracts were not yet time-expired.

3. P.S. Goswami, The Economic Development of Assam, 262. The expanded acreage obviously required greater numbers of planters for supervision, and these had increased from one hundred or so at the start of the 1860's to around eight hundred by 1880. Thacker's 1881, 588-803, shows some 580 British tea planters in Assam, 130 in Bengal, and 40 in Kangra and Dehra Dun, around 750 thus in total in northern India to which must be added some few in the South. The Indian Census of 1881 records a grand-total of 1,119 British-born planters and land holders in the country at the time and a further 143 managers superintendents and assistants, many of whom were probably connected with planting. Of these 1,262, some 200 were indigo planters and a likely 250 or so planters of coffee and lesser plantation crops in the South.

4. Kinney, 44, and see Verner Papers MSS.Eur.E.279 for budgets and prospectuses.

5. StMMPr 1861-62, 309.

6. In the Indian planting context the word 'garden' is a synonym for 'plantation' or 'estate'.

7. G.Watt, A Dictionary of the Economic Products of India, VI, Part III, 422-3. Production in percentages between the three sections was estimated at Private 54, and London and Calcutta companies 29 and 17. Among private owners were such as the barrister A.B.Miller who had recently taken over a small tea garden in Darjeeling from his colleague J.C.Macgregor. See ITA Reports 1889, 127; 1890, 150.

London the following year had a combined capital of £3.3 million, controlled 83,000 planted acres - the Assam Company was still the largest with 10,000 acres (it also made the greatest net profit, £25,600) - and earned on average some seven per cent on their capital.[1] With such substantial absentee ownership the prominent role of the Calcutta Managing Agents in the industry is easily understandable.

For the major companies and managing agencies the idea of some industry-wide approach to the perpetual labour problems was increasingly attractive. (The Assam Company had created an abortive labour recruiting agency in conjunction with other planters in Assam, Sylhet and Cachar as early as 1859.)[2] In 1876 therefore, an Association of all those interested in tea cultivation in Cachar and Sylhet was proposed with the aim of considering general planting problems, but more specifically those of inter garden competition for labour - 'more especially to regulate the rates of bonus and payments to time-expired labourers'.[3] The proposal was not then followed up, but as poaching continued, more European planters, firms and tea agency houses came to see the value of regulation - the newly formed BIPA set an example by fixing standard wage rates for Indian labour - and of forming a Tea Association to ensure 'a general reduction of bonus for the mutual benefit of all'. In the long term such a representative association would also be well placed to push tea sales - in 1880 tea exports were already valued at Rs. 30,000,000, one tenth of Bengal's total[4] - and would also carry far greater weight with government than the existing district planting associations of Tezpur and Dibrugarh could hope to do. Moreover the recent formation of The Indian Tea Districts Association in London also seemed to require the formation of a corresponding body in India.[5] Accordingly, following preliminary spadework, mainly by D.Cruickshank and A.Wilson,[6] a meeting was called on 18 May 1881 at the Bengal Chamber of

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1. ITA Report 1895, 254-5.

2. See A History of the Assam Company ..., 98, and Ukers, I, 166. Ukers here refers to the agency as a tea planters' association, possibly in view of the fact that its members, besides jointly handling recruitment affairs, fixed wage agreements amongst themselves and petitioned Government about steamer services.

3. Undated memorandum by A.Wilson of Jardine, Skinner, & Co. in ITA Report 1882, 27.

4. Report on the Administration of the Customs Department in the Bengal Presidency for the Official Year 1879-80, 3, 17.

5. ITA Report 1882, 28 (Wilson's memorandum), and 42-47.

6. Cruickshank had issued in December 1880 two memoranda on the proposed formation. See Report ibid. 30-36.

Commerce, with A.J. Inglis (a partner with Cruickshank in the Begg, Dunlop firm) in the chair, at which the Indian Tea Association was brought into being with headquarters in Calcutta.[1]

The objects and duties of the ITA, as it was popularly known, were 'to promote the common interests of all persons concerned in the cultivation of tea in India'. Membership of the Association was open to 'Proprietors and Managers of and Agents for Tea Estates (including Limited Companies ... represented by their Agents or Secretaries ...)'. Rule 6 laid down that the ITA might 'be represented in the Tea Districts by existing Local Associations working in conformity with /its/ Rules and by District Committees appointed for the purpose of carrying out /its/ objects'.[2] By 1882 the membership consisted of twenty seven British firms and agency houses, including the most powerful Managing Agents, and as Keswick, Chairman of the first annual general meeting on 22 February 1882 pointed out, that membership represented 'a planted area of over 103,000 acres', (some four-fifths of the estimated 127,000 acres North Indian total).[3] The Association grew steadily, with the tea industry, but from the start its direction came under the control of the dozen or so leading Calcutta Managing Agents with major tea interests,[4] who rotated membership of the General Committee among themselves. The say in ITA affairs which they took to themselves reflected their weight in the industry. In 1885-86 thus, when the whole membership represented 143,000 planted acres of tea, the leading twelve agencies between them controlled 121,000 acres.[5]

The first action taken in 1881 by the newly formed Association after settling its constitution and committee was to agree rules to prevent poaching of coolies. Some 'consideration' had to be given to time-expired coolies if they were to be induced to enter into new contracts under the regular Masters'.

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1. Report ibid. 28, 42-47.

2. By 1883-4 ITA District Committees had thus been set up, amongst other centres, at Tezpur and Dibrugarh, thereby apparently absorbing the relevant local planting associations into the ITA.

3. ITA Report 1882, 2; 1897, 15. (Till 1900 these annual reports related to the year ended 28 (or 29) February. In 1900 a second report, from March to December, was issued, and from 1901 the report period co-incided with the calendar year).

4. The first General Committee of the Association consisted of Messrs A.Wilson (Jardine, Skinner), J.H.Edwards (Gillanders, Arbuthnot), R.Williamson (Finlay, Muir), D.F.Mackenzie (Macneill), R.B.Magor (Williamson, Magor), A.Simson (Schoene, Kilburn), D.Cruickshank (Begg, Dunlop), L.Worke (Octavius, Steel), and P. Playfair (Shaw, Finalyson).

5. Membership representation in thousands of acres: Finlay, Muir 15.4; Octavius, Steel 15.2; Williamson, Magor 15.1; Macneill 14.3; Begg, Dunlop 13.4; Schoene, Kilburn 12.3; Jardine, Skinner 10.6; Balmer, Lawrie 6.3; Lloyd and Barry - both 5.5; Mackinnon, Mackenzie 4.4; Planters' Stores and Agency 3.0. See ITA Report 1886, 20.

and Workmen's law, Act XIII of 1859. The ITA achievement was to agree a fixed maximum set of bonuses or advances - Rs. 6 for men, Rs. 4 for women and lesser sums in proportion for children - to be paid when such new contracts were signed, and have this accepted by all Association members. Likewise wage rates were not to exceed those current for the locality or as fixed by the Association.[1]

The poaching problem had been an internal one, but the next important issue - of legislation covering the recruitment and transporting of tea garden coolies - involved the ITA in negotiations with government. The first such measure, Bengal Act III of 1863, prompted by the 1861 Committee of Enquiry, (but with the Landholders and Commercial Association pleading that 'interference ... should be no greater than is absolutely necessary'), had required the licensing of labour contractors and transport vessels, care in selecting and briefing coolies and the appointment of Superintendents of Emigration in recruiting and forwarding areas.[2] Bengal Act VI of 1865 carried protection of the coolie to the tea plantation, prescribing minimum wages, limiting hours of work and appointing a Government protector and an inspector for the labourers. After a further commission of enquiry and government investigations, additional legislation was enacted in 1870 and 1873,[3] allowing the use of tea garden sardars or headmen as recruiting agents, as well as independent contractors, continuing government supervision and inspection of transit and tea garden conditions, and permitting short term tea labour contracts to be entered into (under Act XIII of 1859) outside the provisions of the latest Act.[4] In 1880 a further commission brought the working of the Bengal Emigration Act of 1873 under review in the light of the dynamic expansion of the tea industry in the 1870's and a memorial of the Indian Tea Districts Association in London on the subject. The Commission reported in January 1881, and its recommendations led to the introduction of a new Inland Emigration Bill into the Indian Legislative Council that summer. Study of the Bill provided the first occasion on which the newly formed ITA was able to put its views to Government,[5] as it did again shortly afterwards in 'a very

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1. ITA Report 1882, 52, 59-60.

2. Ukers I, 166, Griffiths 269, Harler 136 and Petition of the Landholders and Commercial Association of British India, dated 28 February 1863, in Bengal Bills Objects & Reasons 1862 to 1864.

3. Bengal Act II of 1870 and Act VII of 1873.

4. Griffiths, 269-77.

5. Four European non-officials though, representing the Calcutta mercantile community and the tea planting interest, had been on the 1880 Commission along with four government representatives.

good answer' to objections raised in a British Indian Association memorial. The new Inland Emigration Act, Act I of 1882, consequently took a form more to the planters' liking than might otherwise have been the case had the 'erroneous impressions' advanced by the British Indian Association about conditions and treatment of coolies in the tea districts been allowed to stand unopposed.[1]

In practice, however, Act I proved unsatisfactory. One of its aims had been to allow free emigration to Assam instead of requiring the coolie to have entered into a contract before a magistrate in his home district. Now that Assam was better known and better served by transport, the coolie could make his own way there and decide on the spot whether to enter into a local contract - of one to three years - with a tea garden under the provisions of Act XIII of 1859.[2] Unfortunately under the new Act, Goalpara, at the very mouth of the Assam Valley, was designated a tea labour district, though it was some three to four hundred miles from the upper tea gardens. Unscrupulous contractors therefore avoided the protective provisions of earlier Acts, and got coolies to sign under Act XIII as free migrants at the Brahmaputra river port of Dhubri in Goalpara, though they had never seen the garden to which they bound themselves by contract.[3] Such coolies were very ill served by Act I. The planters, too, had complaints - about the 'absurdly numerous' garden registers and 'elaborate' returns that had now to be meticulously written up, coupled with the over-inquisitorial nature of government inspectors' probings. Government's refusal to allow recruitment in labour-surplus Madras, though Assam was suffering a labour shortage, was

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1. Remarks of the Chairman, J.J.J. Keswick, at the ITA's annual meeting in February 1882. The British Indian Association memorial of December 1881 - prepared hurriedly and noted in Legislative Council as containing 'many misconceptions and mistakes' - stressed that not a single native gentleman had been appointed to the 1880 Commission which thus 'viewed the subject from the tea-planters' stand-point alone' - emphasised the ignorance of the coolies entering into contracts, (a point also strongly made in an Indian Association memorial submitted later), and particularly objected to the extension of the contract period from three to five years and the free recruiting which was permitted free from the Act's provisions. Notwithstanding, the Indian Member of Council, Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore, was able to effect only minor amendments to the new measure. See India Acts 1882 with Bills & Connected Papers, Leg.Cl.progs. 1882, XX, 172-243, ibid. 1883, XXI, 1-29, ITA Report 1882, 3, 97-130, J.C. Bagal, History of the Indian Association 1876-1951, 53, and Griffiths, 275.

2. The Assam Admin. Report 1883-84, vii, noted the greater stimulus to emigration into the tea districts.

3. The exploitation of the free recruiting system thus allowed is demonstrated by the fact that in 1888, of the 25,600 coolies emigrating to Assam, only 3,800 were Act I coolies, the remaining 21,800 (eighty five per cent) proceeding as free coolies, see Bengal Leg.Cl.progs. 30.3.1889, 19.

another grievance, while a proposal to repeal the Masters' and Workmen's Act XIII of 1859, the basis of considerable labour control in the gardens, drew howls of range.

Irritated as they were by so much legislation, planters made it clear that they were in no mood to volunteer for service on Ripon's new Local District Boards. (They had been irritated enough by the way Government had enticed away their coolies for work on district roads and bridges by higher pay.) And the feeling that Government was somehow anti-planter, aired at the beginning of 1883 in ITA district committee meetings at Jorehat and Sibsagar, became a settled and passionate conviction when the Ilbert Bill was then introduced.[1] That the power of district magistrates and judges to intervene on behalf of the tea garden coolie might pass into native hands was as a red rag to a bull.[2] The ITA in Calcutta, the main tea agency houses, the district committees of the Association and the closely linked local planting bodies threw their whole weight behind the opposition to the Ilbert Bill, as has been seen.

In that clash the non-official European community as a whole won a resounding victory. But the tea planters also managed to wring significant sectional concessions from government. In reply to criticism of Act I of 1882 by the ITA, the Chief Commissioner of Assam went to some lengths to show that 'the general tendency of the Act had been to throw increased power into the hands of Tea Planters', stressing that 'the maximum period of contract had been raised from 3 to 5 years', and though he refused to modify the Rules laid down under the Act, he was at pains to deny any intention of harassing the planters.[3]

More success accrued on the second important point on which ITA representation had been made to Government, for the Association heard with pleasure that Act XIII - which allowed contracts to be entered into with fewer formalities than under Act I - was not after all to be repealed in Assam.[4] Again, the Madras Government, after some delay, allowed the recruitment of coolies from its Ganjam and Vizagapatam districts for the Assam tea gardens, as the

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1. Chairman Keswick's remarks at ITA's annual general meeting in March 1883, and Englishman, 22.2 and 1.3.1883 reporting ITA district committee meetings in January and February at Jorehat and Sibsagar.

2. As Keswick's speech ibid. noted, with sardars accepting bribes to hand over to other parties coolies recruited for their own gardens, before contracts had been signed, the Natives were far too wily as it was.

3. Letter 23.3.1883 from Personal Assistant to Chief Commissioner of Assam to Secretary ITA, given in ITA Report 1884, 24-52.

4. See correspondence in ITA Report 1883, 75-78, and ibid. 1885, 4, 47-51.

ITA had requested.[1] ITA's early pressure group tactics had paid off.

The Association was also notably successful in organising action by its own members. A resolution at the AGM of February 1885 proclaimed 'a reduction in the cost of producing tea is absolutely necessary' and declared it 'desirable to materially reduce the bonuses payable to coolies on renewing agreements'. Many months of work by the General Committee issued accordingly in new Bonus Rules amongst ITA members which came into force in January 1886. These not only again stipulated maximum bonus rates and the keeping of wages within agreed rate standards, but made a more sophisticated attack on the habit of poaching coolies from other gardens by offering perquisites 'such as rum, rice, blankets, etc.'.[2] In addition the ITA Chairman pointedly hinted that there was nothing to prevent District Committees adopting more stringent Bonus Rules.[3] In like vein the General Committee, fearful that the 'high wages paid to coolies by some Gardens in the Darjeeling District', might 'cause a general rise in the cost of labour' recommended a local district committee of ITA members to tackle the problem.[4] For the Bengal Duars area ITA members had already agreed in 1883 to 'form a combination ... to equalize and keep down the gradually increasing rates paid for labour',[5] and an appeal was now made to those controlling non-ITA gardens in that area

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1. Ibid., 1890, 78-83.

2. The 1882 Act fixed minimum rates of five rupees for a man and four rupees for a woman per month in the first three years of the contract and six and five rupees respectively for the last two years. (The Verner Papers show field and office babus getting a monthly salary of thirty to forty rupees and the European garden manager three hundred.) Coolies could add to their minimum wages by doing contract work, and they were housed and given medical attention by their employers and were entitled by law to food grain at 'reasonable prices' (fixed by the Local Government) where they were unable to buy from the local markets.

3. ITA Report, 1885, 15; 1886, 15, 16, 116-135.

4. Ibid., 1886, 50-58. The Darjeeling gardens were fortunate in having a supply of local planting labour, from Nepal, so that formal contracts were unnecessary.

5. The Duars being nearer the recruiting grounds than Assam incurred lower costs and could afford the higher wages necessary to keep free coolies on the gardens. (There were no long-term contracts as in Assam, at most - like Darjeeling - a yearly agreement under section 492 of the Indian Penal Code. The same pattern prevailed in the Darjeeling Terai though being unhealthier it probably had to pay even higher wages.) See Griffiths 274-284 and Report of the Labour Enquiry Commission of 1895 (for short LEC Report), 51, given in India Rev. & Agric. Progs. Emigration, 1897, 167ff.

to join the Association to make the combination more widespread.[1] Similarly, the ITA members combined for their mutual benefit to fix maximum rates to be paid to recruiters of free labour in the Recruiting Districts, the prices for first class adult jungly coolies (those from Chota Nagpur) being set at Rs.30 per delivery at Raniganj, Rs.65 at Calcutta and Rs.75 at Dhubri, in Goalpara.[2] Other issues to which the ITA gave its attention in the mid-1880's included railways and river navigation (improved communication with Cachar was thus pressed), the high rates of royalty on government forest timber, the assessment of tea land grants for local rates, the rate of customs duty in England on tea - which the Times had urged should be raised - and the opening out of a trade in brick tea with Tibet.[3] No doubt too it provided information and advisory services to individual members upon request.

With such a spate of activity the ITA outgrew its original premises at 12 Mission Row, and the services which the Honorary Secretary Cruickshank could provide. In the spring of 1882 therefore a paid Secretary was appointed, G.M. Barton, and in 1885 the Association moved into the premises of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and under its wing. The Bengal Chamber Secretary became ex officio Secretary to the ITA, while Barton as a member of the Chamber's staff continued as Assistant Secretary of the Association. There was work for both, for the ITA now had District Committees in Cachar, North and South Sylhet, Lashkarpur (Habiganj), Gauhati, Bishnath, Tezpur, Mangaldai, Nowgong, Golaghat, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Dibrugarh and Chittagong, and a membership which controlled a planted area approaching one and a half lakh acres of tea.[4]

In 1886-7 the publication of a Land and Revenue Regulation for Assam[5] which was shortly to come into operation caused consternation in ITA circles. Its General Committee quickly warned District Committees and the Cachar Committee 'strongly protested against any occupancy or tenant rights being ever acquired [by coolies] upon waste lands which had been granted by Government

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1. ITA Report 1884, 63-5; 1886, 58-66. For the Duars area see B.C.Ghose, The Development of Tea Industry in the District of Jalpaiguri 1869-1968, Walter Duncan and Goodricke Ltd., The Duncan Group, and the Verner Papers.

2. ITA Report 1884, 66-7. The fixing of maximum rates for recruiters and for bonus payments attracted no government notice in [J.W. Quinton], Special Report on the Working of Act I of 1882 in the Province of Assam during the Years 1886-1889.

3. ITA Report 1885, 5-12; 1886, 9-43.

4. Reports ibid. 1882, 81, 139; 1883, 18; 1884, 114-5; 1885, 143-4; 1886, 17; 1887, 45-6, Griffiths, 516. In 1892-3 on Barton's retirement to Britain W.Parsons succeeded him as Assistant Secretary, relinquishing the position in turn to J.D.P.White in 1896-7 on Parsons' appointment as Bengal Chamber Secretary. In March 1898 on White's resignation, J.T.Roberts briefly succeeded him in the post, handing over early in 1899 to H.M.Haywood who held the assistant secretaryship till 1907-8.

5. See Assam Gazette, 3,4.1886.

to Tea Planters and others'.[1] The Cachar planters had, in fact, - in accordance with prevailing practice - taken up as much waste land as possible under the favourable concessionary terms in force and as a result there was much land not planted to tea in their gardens. (The opposition to garden coolies acquiring occupancy rights in such waste corners, which they cleared for food crops, remained indeed a very live issue for years to come.)[2] The Cachar District Committee, under the chairmanship of the prominent planter (and EAIDA Council Member) William Aitchison, was particularly active. J.F. Macnair, chairing the ITA's 1887 annual meeting, reported 'the successful carrying out of the reduction of bonuses ... in ... Cachar is an example which might be copied with advantage elsewhere'.[3]

Such peripheral tinkering did nothing to solve the far more pressing problem of how to get enough labour to meet a vastly expanded production. In ten years from 1879 to 1888 the total outturn of Indian tea had risen from forty to ninety six million lbs, eighty eight million in north India[4] and with so many more bushes to be plucked the overriding labour problem was 'how to obtain a full supply at a moderate cost'.[5] Dissatisfaction had grown steadily within ITA ranks at the way labour contractors and their agents (arcutties) had used the free recruiting system permitted by Act I of 1882 to sign on coolies at Dhubri in Goalpara, for such labour both cost more and was less willing to work than labour directly recruited by gardens' own sardars. The Association therefore asked the Bengal Government for the abolition of the Dhubri system and fed the European non-official representative in the Bengal Legislative Council, C.R. Moore, with information about its drawbacks.

The Bengal Council was then preparing the Inland Emigration Sanitation Act, Act I of 1889, in consultation with the ITA and the Bengal Chamber, to provide improved sanitation and inspection for such free recruits. But the Act as passed made little other change in the system while the Government of India avoided change of the sort the ITA desired on the plea that an enquiry committee was currently investigating the working of Act I of

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1. ITA Report, 1887, 11.

2. See for example article 'The Dooars Waste Land Rules' in Indian Planters' Gazette 25.1.1896.

3. ITA Report 1887, 2.

4. Assam 42 million lbs, Cachar and Sylhet 27 million, Darjeeling, the Terai and Duars, 19 million.

5. ITA Report, 1888, 5; 1889, 39.

1882.[1] So serious was the labour supply position that the ITA Chairman J.N. Stuart raised the question in 1889 and again in 1890 of ITA members themselves forming a Central Recruiting Agency. Though in March 1890 the Assam Commissioner had given welcome news that Dhubri was no longer to be a tea labour district, a broad solution to the labour problem seemed 'as far off as ever'. So in January 1892 Stuart's suggestion was at last acted upon when, at a meeting of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, a Tea Districts Labour Supply Association was brought into being.[2]

Such success for the ITA was very welcome, for the isolated, pioneering British planters were an independent-minded lot, (they wouldn't have travelled so far to rain swept, malarious, cholera-haunted tea gardens had they not been so),[3] and all too ready to assert local independence of central control. The Darjeeling planters had formed a local committee in 1872-3, and in 1886 in a controversy over wage rates, W. Lloyd and J. Munro, tea garden proprietor and manager respectively, tried to form a separate Darjeeling Planters' Association to serve the high labour-cost district.[4] This was finally founded in 1892 with Major R.J. Harrison as its first Honorary Secretary.[5] Duars planters also had their own Association, founded in the 1880's.[6] From

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1. ITA Report 1890, 2, 45-50, and Bengal Leg.Cl.progs. 20.4.1889, 31-2. The enquiry - pressed for in a letter of 12 April 1888 from the Indian Association, giving evidence of abuses in recruiting and on the gardens - dealt with recruitment, contracts of work and conditions and wages in the tea gardens. The enquiry committee inspected about one in seven of the Assam tea gardens and though finding some abuses, reported in a favourable light on the planting system at work in general. See /Quinton/, and Bagal, appendix E.

2. ITA Report 1889, 2; 1890, 2,3; 1891, 2, Bengal C/Comm Report 1891-2,I, 100, and Ukers, I, 166. This new Labour Association took over the smaller associations then in existence with the exception of the Assam Labour Association, see Griffiths, 292.

3. Kinney, and W.R.Gawthrop, The Story of the Assam Railway and Trading Company Limited 1881-1951, record the communication difficulties in the pioneering era. In time and with much non-official pressure, communications were improved. Roads were built and better maintained, and steamer services on the river became speedier and more frequent. By 1881 there was a railway link already to Dhubri; by 1903 only a short section on the Dhubri-Gauhati line, nearing completion, stood between a complete railway connection between Calcutta and Dibrugarh. Similarly the Cachar tea districts were linked by rail to Chittagong on the coast in 1898. See Imperial Gazetteer of India, Eastern Bengal and Assam, 8-9, Griffiths 633-44.

4. Indian Planters' Gazette 10.8.1886, 17.8.1886.

5. Darjeeling Branch Indian Tea Association, The Darjeeling Branch Indian Tea Association 1873-1973, 20, 22. This centenary brochure notes the affiliation of the Darjeeling Planters' Association with the ITA in 1910 and its transformation into the ITA's Darjeeling branch in 1951.

6. Griffiths, 518, Ghose, 50, notes that this association too became a branch of the ITA in 1950. In the early 1890's the subjects of roads, communications generally, labour and land legislation were amongst those which its members discussed. Like other planting bodies it experienced a mixed measure of success in pressing its concerns with Government. Witness its failure in 1894 to obtain the lowering of carriage rates on the Bengal Dooars Railway to those in force on the Eastern Bengal Railway. See ITA Report 1895, 91-8.

September 1892 the Darjeeling and Dooars Associations formed a joint ITA sub-committee to liase with the ITA in Calcutta. This ITA Sub-Committee[1] dealt also with planting affairs in the Darjeeling Terai region where a Terai Planters' Association had come into being, whilst a loose liaison was maintained with the separate Dehra Dun and Kangra Valley Planters' Associations in the NWP and the Punjab.[2] In 1889 the Assam Valley planters, previously organised in scattered local district committees, formed themselves into the collectively much stronger Assam Branch of the ITA. By 1890 a South Sylhet Branch had also come into existence, and though its successor the Central Sylhet Branch failed in 1893 for want of a Secretary, ITA branches at Cachar and Balisera had by that year come into operation. By the beginning of 1898 the South Sylhet Branch was being resuscitated, and the ITA Surma Valley Sub-Committee's inauguration in 1900 led the following year to the amalgamation of the Cachar and Sylhet branches into a new combined branch, the Surma Valley Branch, further strengthening the ITA's mofussil organisation.[3] The ITA branch and local planting associations in all these changes remained as independent minded as ever. It was of course well understood that local branches and associations should deal in detail with their own local concerns and special interests - the Assam Branch thus deciding to present models of tea machinery to the Economic Museum in Calcutta[4] - as also that the branch problems in Assam differed from those in Bengal. Whilst however appreciating branch and local association co-operation on all-India matters the ITA headquarters yet sought for closer constitutional control over them. The issue was a very prickly one, however, and though re-opened in 1914 was not resolved in the way ITA headquarters wished.[5] Local self-reliance did not always seem sufficient, however. The massacres in Manipur, in which Quinton, Chief Commissioner of Assam, lost his life in March 1891, followed by dacoities and murder committed in 1892 in Sylhet and Cachar, caused widespread panic among the isolated tea gardens in these last two regions, especially after the murder of the Cachar planter C.G. Cockburn. The local planters were glad on this occasion to have the Bengal Chamber, the EAIDA and ITA pressing Government to provide special protection to planters,

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1. Like the ITA General Committee, membership of the Sub-Committee was rotated amongst the leading agency houses concerned.
2. ITA Report 1898, 2; 1902, 2.
3. ITA Reports 1890-1901, Griffiths, 517-19.
4. See proceedings of Assam Branch AGM 20.7.1901 in ITA Report 1901, 53-84.
5. Report, ibid. 1914, xi, 4-5, 73-6.

though in the event the Assam Chief Commissioner after making sympathetic noises refused to act, arguing that if tea planters established tea gardens in such volatile border areas they did so at their own risk.[1]

An informal approach to the ITA by the Assam Chief Commissioner for names from which to select a 'tea planting representative' to the Viceroy's Council softened the blow, however, as James Buckingham a prominent Assam planter was duly appointed.[2] Buckingham and the ITA soon had occasion to make their voices heard, for having considered reports on the working of Act I of 1882 from both the Assam and Bengal administrations, the Government of India put forward proposals for an amending measure in 1893 - it was to become Act VII of that year - on which they invited the Association's comments. (It was in fact 'in view of the possibility of coolie legislation' that the Viceroy had wanted 'to get a good Additional Member from Assam', and had asked the Assam Chief Commissioner informally to approach the ITA.)[3] Whilst impressed on the whole that the free recruiting system was working well,[4] Government wished to reduce certain malpractices and to find remedies for the high coolie sickness and mortality rates still occuring. One very contentious issue, however, was the continuance of the five year term of contract, on which a stiff debate took place in the Legislative Council and its Select Committee with P.C. Rao Pantulu urging reduction to a three year term, while J.L. Mackay, the Bengal Chamber leader, persuasively argued that 'this was going too far' and Buckingham made strong representations against any change at all. In the event Government fixed a four year period as the maximum contract term allowed, and the ITA General Committee, if not completely satisfied, rested generally pleased with Government's readiness to abandon the changes to which they had objected.[5] The tea planting interest, by its steady growth in the 1890's, had acquired a weight which Government could not ignore. The 143,000 acres of tea represented by ITA membership in 1885-6

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1. Bengal C/Comm Report 1892-93, II, 601-22, ITA Report 1893, 5-14, and 1894, 145-179. For an account of the Manipur massacre see E.St.C.Grimwood, My Three Years in Manipur. Brief further detail is also given by Wright. For some background to the Lushai revolt see S.Chatterjee, 'The Cause of the Lushai Rising 1891-92: An Unknown Episode on our North East Frontier' in Quarterly Review of Historical Studies 1969-70, IX No.4, 215-18.

2. ITA Report 1893, 17. Buckingham was to head the Assam Branch of the ITA till he retired to Britain in 1905.

3. Lansdowne to W.E.Ward (Chief Commissioner of Assam), 16.12.1892, Lansdowne C. MSS.Eur.D.558/23.

4. Though conscious that garden conditions could warrant improvement, that sickness rates were still too high, and that the going rates of pay were low, Government held that coolies on the tea gardens were clearly better off than the mass of the people in the districts from which they were recruited.

5. ITA Report 1893, 32-36, 118-211, and Leg.Cl.progs. 1893, XXXII, 20-206.

had almost doubled by 1897 to 275,000 acres when the total North Indian acreage stood at some 400,000 acres.[1] As in earlier years office continued to be held by men from the great agency houses - from 1883 to 1885 A. Wilson of Jardine, Skinner occupied the chair, next, till 1888, Cruickshank and J.F.MacNair of Begg, Dunlop, then from 1889 to 1894 J.N. Stuart of Balmer, Laurie, with a brief intermission in 1892 when A.G. Watson of Williamson, Magor took over. From 1885 the secretaryship of the Association was held, ex-officio, by S.E.J. Clarke, who died in office in 1897, he being succeeded by Parsons (the new Bengal Chamber Secretary) from 1898 to 1907,[2] whilst, following established precedent, from 1895-1910 the chairmanship continued to revolve among the great houses - Shaw Wallace, Balmer Laurie, Williamson Magor, Begg Dunlop, and Duncans.[3]

The tea industry's continuing expansion necessitated constant attention to the labour supply problem. The problem persisted despite the efforts of the Tea Districts' Labour Supply Association. In 1899, of the 33,700 inland emigrants despatched from Bengal to Assam, the Managing Agents were responsible for one half, 12,800 recruited by sardars under their supervision and 4,100 recruited by special local agents in their employ, and probably some of the 14,700 free emigrants too. Government complimented the large firms on the handling of the emigration under their control,[4] though its suggestion - following the findings of a recent Labour Enquiry Commission - that a Central Recruiting Agency having wider scope than the existing Tea Districts' Labour Supply Association should be set up, had to be abandoned in November 1899 owing to 'some important London Companies' holding aloof from the project.[5] The ITA was more successful, however, in strengthening its scientific side.

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1. ITA Report 1897, 15. Of the all-India tea outturn of 148 million lbs in 1897, Assam produced some 58 million lbs, Cachar and Sylhet 46 million, the Duars 24 million, Darjeeling 8 million, the Terai 3 million, Kangra, Dehra Dun and Kumaon 4 million and the remaining area, including native gardens, some 5 million lbs. Ibid. 1898, 142.

2. Parsons in turn was succeeded by H.M. Haywood, the ITA's Assistant Secretary, who held the Secretary's post till 1926.

3. H. S. Ashton, G.A. Ormiston, G.G. Anderson, H.C. Begg, Lockhart Smith, G. Kingsley, R.L. Williamson and T.C. McMorran represented the houses in question. See ITA Reports 1882-1910, Ukers I, 169.

4. India Rev. & Agric. Progs. Emigration, Oct. 1900, A. Nos. 15, 16, 763-5, 793-6.

5. ITA Reports 1896-1900. H.C. Begg had represented the ITA on the 1895 Labour Enquiry Commission and had been prominent in the work to set up the envisaged agency. The companies which held aloof, controlling about fifteen per cent of the north eastern gardens rejected the scheme because it provided for a four months closed season each year wherein only garden sardars were permitted to recruit. They misjudged the value of encouraging sardar recruitment in preference to the costlier contractor system. See Indian Tea Association (London) Report (hereafter in style ITA(L)Report), 1897-8, 12.

From 1891 to 1893 M.K.K. Barber had acted as an ad hoc adviser, but from 1900 a regular scientific department was established - the Bengal and Assam Governments contributing grants in aid - and Drs H.H. Mann and G.D. Hope served as chief scientific officers for the first decade. The rapid growth in productivity and improvements in quality which ensued owed much to their advice, whilst improved machinery and factory technique produced a high standard finished product.

Increased production required increased sales and the publicity work of the former East India Tea Company Secretary R. Blechendyn in America following the Chicago Expedition of 1893 was an important factor in increasing North America's import of Indian tea from 1.3 million lbs in 1891 to 5.2 million lbs in 1896.[1] The Indian tea industry's representation at the important Paris Exhibition in 1900 also had some beneficial effect on sales. In Britain consumption of Chinese tea dropped from 97 million lbs in 1866 to only 21 million lbs in 1897 whilst in the same period the Indian tea consumption increased from 4 to 124 million lbs. Consumption of Ceylon tea, however, which had been only one million lbs in 1883 was by 1897 running India a close second, with a total that year of 85 million lbs,[2] whilst Java and Sumatra were creeping into the world picture too.[3] India's rise to leadership had been dramatic, but although markets were expanding, the still faster growth of output caused prices to fall continuously from 1894 to the end of the century. With falling prices, and severe competition from Ceylon, the economic position of the Indian tea industry was 'not bright at the beginning of the new century'.[4]

Moreover officialdom began 'interfering' in the industry once again. Sir Henry Cotton, appointed Assam Chief Commissioner in 1896, had started off well in the tea industry's eyes when, in a speech at the Bengal Chamber of Commerce at the end of April 1897, some six weeks before Assam's famous earthquake, he had laid down a scheme for the accelerated development of the province.[5] However, his derogatory remarks about planters in a hostile Annual Report for 1900 on Labour Immigration into Assam 'excited great indignation' among planters, proprietors and business houses. The ITA made strong representations to the Government and a well organised Press campaign was

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1. Ukers, II, 315, Griffiths, 584-91.

2. ITA Report 1898, 179.

3. W.H. Ukers, 'Twenty Five Years of Tea and Coffee', Tea and Coffee Trade Journal Sept. 1926, LI No.3, 303.

4. Griffiths 128-9, ITA Report 1900[A] (March to Dec.), ii.

5. ITA Report 1899, 29 and report of Cotton's address in Bengal C/Comm Report 1897-98, II, 372-83.

conducted with the support of the non-official community - the Surma Valley planters for example declared themselves to be with their Assam compatriots 'to a man'. Though the Indian Press gave firm approval and support to the views of the 'fearless champion of the Indian people' and hoped the Government would 'not yield to the clamour of the planters against the Chief Commissioner',[1] Government chose to discount the allegations Cotton had made.[2] Whilst well aware that on the labour side all was not perfect, in Curzon's opinion to go 'bald-headed for the planting community at large' - as Cotton had done - and to represent them 'as a lot of inhuman monsters' was to go too far, and the Assam Commissioner was duly cautioned 'to go slow'.[3] (Curzon himself, popular with the tea planters for the interest he had shown in the industry[4] and especially so following his visit to Assam in the spring of 1900,[5] was in turn to blot his copy-book, however, over the Lyall case of a planter assault on a coolie.)[6]

In 1899 new tea industry legislation was again under discussion by Government with Bills introduced into the Indian Legislative Council in mid-October to consolidate and amend the Assam Labour and Emigrants' Act VII of 1893 and the less contentious Inland Emigration Health Act I of 1889. The most contentious proposal in the first of these Bills was to raise the minimum monthly wages of tea garden labour from Rs.5 to Rs.6 for men and from Rs.4 to Rs.5 for women. A vigorous response was made by the ITA, supported by the Bengal Chamber and by Sir Patrick Playfair of Barry & Co. - whose views the Bengal Government had specifically requested. A special ITA Assam Branch conference to consider the Bills was held at Tezpur at the start of December 1899 and tea planters' meetings were called in other areas; all produced resolutions of strong opposition to the new coolie labour Bill. Buckingham,

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1. Voice of India, 5.10.1901.

2. ITA Report 1901, 22, 179-262, ibid. 1902, 20, 169-175, Bengal C/Comm Report 1901, I, 11, and Luskerpore and Balisera Valley District Cttee progs. 22.9.1901. For Cotton's viewpoint on the issue see Indian and Home Memories, 258-77.

3. Curzon to Hamilton 11.9.1901, Curzon C. MSS.Eur.F.111/160, 272-3. It was probably Curzon who, in sending his A.D.C. to stop some noïsy Indian servants, added the instructions (from his knowledge of the spate of racial assault cases): 'Kick them on the shins /but/ be careful of their spleens'. See account in E.J. Buck, Simla Past and Present, 68.

4. In March 1899 the Viceroy had met informally with a small ITA deputation, see ITA Report 1899, 37-9.

5. Report ibid. 1900, 3, and Indian and Home Memories, 243.

6. See above pages 120-2.

the ITA Assam Branch Chairman, and R.H. Henderson, the Cachar Branch Chairman, both specifically appointed as non-official Additional Members of the Viceroy's Legislative Council - for Buckingham it was the second such appointment - to help in framing the Bills, pressed the ITA's viewpoint there with great persistance and managed to get the wage increases in the original Bill whittled down. Though the new Assam Labour and Emigration Act, Act VI of 1901, when finally passed into law was not as much to the ITA's liking as hoped,[1] nevertheless the 'unceasing efforts' in Council of Buckingham and Henderson - over the opposition of Cotton and three of the four Indian members of Council - resulted in the postponement for two years of the implementation of that section of the Act which prescribed an increase in labourers' wages.[2] Once more Government had shown itself susceptible to non-official British pressure.

It was not only official criticism which the ITA had to rebut. In 1893 both the Indian Association and the Rev Charles Dowding, a chaplain at Dibrugarh, had launched sharp attacks on the planters. Sir Philip Hutchins, the Law Member, showed up the flaws in the Indian Association's case at a Legislative Council Meeting in March 1893, while Buckingham tackled Dowding in the columns of the Indian Churchman. While admitting that coolie deaths on unhealthy gardens were excessive, he demonstrated that much of the disease was carried to the gardens by the coolies themselves while for Assam as a whole deathrates were lower than in many provinces - the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab for example.[3] In this he could draw upon the Assam Chief Commissioner himself who had in effect accepted the statement of the Rev S. Endle an SPG Missionary at Tezpur which had incited Dowding that the 'evil ... is, to a great extent, an imaginary one'. As the Chief Commissioner pointed out in 1890, while there had beenninety two complaints or enquiries

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1. Minimum monthly wages to both men and women labourers were raised by eight annas over the 1882 Act rates for the second and third years of the contract term.

2. ITA Report 1900, 18-22, 69-136; 1900[A], 5, 6, 21, 128-139; 1901, 19 and Leg.Cl.progs. 1901, XL, 147-58.

3. Leg.Cl.progs. 23.3.1893, XXXII, 140-1, and C.Dowding, Tea-garden Coolies in Assam for Dowding's case and a reprint of the Indian Churchman correspondence. The editor of this Church paper summed up the lengthy controversy in his columns thus: 'On the whole we are struck by the fairness and moderation of the reply to Mr. Dowding ... We cannot, therefore, help thinking that with the best intentions in the world, he has generalised from an insufficient observation of facts'. Whilst conceding that there was room for improvement in garden conditions, the Indian Government likewise concluded that Dowding's harsh attack was based on a narrow and unrepresentative sample. See India Rev. & Agric.Progs. Emigration, June 1897, No.2.

about recruitment by force or fraud into Assam tea districts in 1888 that figure had to be set against a total immigration of 46,200 coolies that year.[1] Similarly when India, the Indian National Congress journal published in Britain, spoke in 1893 of the 'thinly-disguised slavery' of employment in the tea gardens - echoing similar objections in the Indian Press in 1882 - and in 1896 and 1899 Congress and the Indian Association repeated the charge,[2] it was the Indian owned New India which replied in September 1901 that 'The planters are as good or as bad as ordinary Englishmen, with their education, and of their standing, are' and conceded that 'many of them are good men and kind masters'.[3]

One important feature of the efforts made by the tea industry to influence Government, had been the activity of The Indian Tea Districts Association in England. This Association had come into existence on 22 July 1879 with Sir Douglas Forsyth as its first Chairman and Ernest Tye as its first Secretary;[4] in 1880 its memorial advising amendment of Act VII of 1873 had been studied carefully by Government[5] and close liaison had been maintained with the ITA once that body had been set up in Calcutta. (Representations to Government in India by the Calcutta body always took heed of views of the London Association.) In the Ilbert Bill controversy, in the periodic discussions on the renewal of shipping and inland steamer contracts, where revised freight and passenger rates were thrashed out, in seeing that the Indian tea industry's views were placed prominently before the Currency Enquiry Commission appointed to investigate objections to the establishment of a gold standard in India,[6] in representations regarding excessive dock and warehouse charges in England, and now in a December 1900 memorial to the

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1. [Quinton], 34, 44, 229-42, Dowding, 38.

2. Leg.Cl.progs. 5.1.1882, XXI, 7-8, Pal, 445-7, Bagal, 123-4, Dowding, 62, and India Bills Objects & Reasons 1901 giving Indian Association memorial of 22 December 1899.

3. New India 23.9.1901, quoted in Voice of India 19.10.1901.

4. For proceedings of inauguration meeting see Allen's Indian Mail 28.7.1879. Forsyth was to remain Chairman for seven years to be succeeded from 1886/7 to 1897/8 by Lieutenant-General Henry Hopkinson and from 1898/9 to 1902/3 by Sir Seymour King who then continued as President till 1917/18. Well known Indian tea industry personalities such as George Williamson, D. Cruickshank, R.K. Magor, T. McMorran of Duncan Brothers (ITA Chairman 1909/10, 1910/11) and H.S. Ashton were among those who, with the famous Assam doctor-turned entrepreneur J. Berry White, held the chairmanship or vice chairmanship during this period. Tye remained Secretary from 1879/80 to 1905/6 to be followed by the now Sir James Buckingham for the next five years and then by W.H. Pease for the four years till 1916/17. See Ukers, I, 170, II, 200.

5. Leg.Cl.progs. 1881 XX, 173-5.

6. The artificial raising of the sterling value of the rupee it was stressed worked disadvantageously to India's exports competing with those of countries left on a silver standard.

Secretary of State against the increased coolie wages envisaged by the contentious Act VI, the London Association acted as an extended arm of the Calcutta Association.[1] In fact in 1894, to cement the connection more firmly, the Indian Tea Districts' Association - it had apparently by the late 1880's slightly changed its original title - had merged with the ITA and became its London Branch, being thenceforth known as the Indian Tea Association (London).[2] The London Association likewise played its part in the promotion of tea sales, taking over the supervision of Blechynden's work from the ITA and taking space at Exhibitions, as in Paris in 1900. It pressed for cheaper telegraph rates to the East, and was especially active over the question of the rate of British Import Duty on Indian tea. This duty, already thought unsatisfactorily high at fourpence a lb in 1898 had been increased to sixpence in March 1900 in view of the Boer War emergency and again from April 1904 until August 1905 by a further twopence a lb. The first mild concession from Government secured by the ITA(L) was the reduction by one month of the period for which the last twopenny increase was imposed. Then, following further agitation and the formation of an Anti-Tea Duty League by members of the ITA(L) in January 1905, the duty was reduced to sixpence again from July 1905, and then to fivepence in 1906, at which rate it was to remain until 1914.[3]

The ITA(L), in common with the Ceylon Association in London,[4] was also active in seeking to deal with the economic recession affecting the tea industry in India and Ceylon at the turn of the century, proposing in February 1901 and again a little later a voluntary reduction of tea production in those two countries, though because of insufficient support from Ceylon the scheme had to be abandoned.[5]

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1. ITA Reports 1883, 1892, 1893, ITA(L) Reports 1897-8, 1898-9, 1900-1, Bengal Leg.Cl.progs. 6.4.1889, 25-7.

2. Ukers, I, 407, II, 199, and Bengal Leg.Cl.progs. 6.4.1889 showing modification of first title. (As Griffiths, 513, notes, many of the records of this Association were destroyed in the blitz of London in 1943. The 1897-8 Report is the first extant report located in England, as too in India after personal search.)

3. ITA(L) Reports 1898-9 to 1909-10, Ukers, II, 125-6.

4. The Ceylon Association had been formed in April 1888 'for the protection and furtherance of the general interests of Ceylon', see Ukers, II, 202. A precedent for the working together of both Associations in common interest had been established by the co-operation from the mid-1890's of Mackenzie, the Ceylon Tea Commissioner in America, with the efforts of Blechynden there. In 1904 the ITA(L) and the Ceylon Association set up a Standing Joint Committee of India and Ceylon in which to discuss ongoing matters of mutual interest.

5. ITA(L) Report 1900-1, 6, 7; 1901-2, 15, ITA Report 1900[A], xvi.

By contrast, however, the idea of attempting to widen tea markets secured a more enthusiastic response. Whilst some saw the way out in encouraging production and sale of the cheaper green tea, it was the proposal for a tea cess to be devoted to sales promotion which was taken up with a will. Whereas there had been a less than fifty per cent response to the ITA appeal for voluntary contributions to its American and Foreign Market Fund established in the 'nineties, the memorial presented to the Viceroy in March 1902, which called for the imposition of a compulsory tea cess to be used to expand the industry's markets, achieved support from some eighty per cent of the whole area under tea cultivation in India.[1] Accordingly Government brought in the Indian Tea Cess Act, Act XI of 1903, by which a cess of $\frac{1}{4}$ pie per lb was levied on exports of Indian tea and the proceeds used to create a fund to promote the Indian tea industry.[2] On the twenty-strong Tea Cess Committee set up under the Act, with E. Cable President of the Bengal Chamber as its first Chairman, four representatives from the Bengal and Madras Chambers of Commerce sat with seven ITA headquarter nominees and nine representatives from ITA branches and other European tea planting associations.[3] In the decade to follow, the Cess Fund was to be used principally for vigorous tea publicity and sales campaigns in the United States and Europe.[4]

By the eve of the First World War North Indian tea production had risen to 285 million lbs from 543,000 acres,[5] and the industry - under continued Managing Agency control[6] - had reached maturity. There was no longer a profusion of waste land waiting to be taken up, and the Managing Agents were now concerned not with the pioneer opening up of virgin territory, but rather with seeing that established gardens continued to run profitably and on a demonstrably efficient and humane basis. It was symptomatic of the new status of the industry that its representatives now sat as of established right in the provincial Legislative Councils.

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1. ITA Report 1900[A], ii, 1902, ii, 5.

2. ITA(L)Report 1902-3, appendix 24, 25.

3. Ibid., 25-31. Indian owned plantations were too small to be represented. The first Indian Tea Planters' Association, that at Jalpaiguri, was not formed until 1918. See Ghose 80-81, Griffiths 533-5.

4. Griffiths, 592-603.

5. ITA(L) Report 1906-7, 25; 1910-11, 24 and Griffiths, 144.

6. In 1910 for example the James Finlay firm - the leading member - managed around 15% of the ITA's membership acreage, to be followed, in order, by Williamson, Magor and Octavius, Steel with some 10% each, and Macneill, Duncan Brothers and Begg, Dunlop all at around 6%. Planters' Stores and Agency, Shaw, Wallace and Balmer, Laurie in turn each represented around 5%. See ITA Report 1910, 40.

In the South of India the form of the planting industry, and indeed the problems which arose in its development, were rather different from those in the North. Coffee, rubber and cinchona planting obviously each differed in their nature, as, of course, did lesser plantation crops such as cardamoms and peppers. Geography and climate brought their own regional problems, whilst those of labour supply were again particular to the South. Organisationally too there were differences. Agency house control of the industry was notably lacking, (not surprisingly, in view of the absence of capital investment from Britain), while, on the other hand, all the European plantation industries in the South were to come under the control of one roof organisation, the UPASI (as the United Planters' Association of Southern India was popularly to be known), and not as in the North under associations particular to each crop.

Where in Assam, the dominant planting centre in the North, the Brahmaputra river linked the planting areas and facilitated communications before and indeed after the railway had made an inroad into the Province, South India's main planting region was the tumbled mountains of the Western Ghats.[1] Where planting in Assam spread out gradually from the Sibsagar-Dibrugarh region,[2] South India's planting industry grew instead from a series of individual centres stretching along the summits and slopes of the Western Ghats from the Baba Budan Hills in the north of Mysore down to the extreme south of Travancore - with the two ends the first to develop[3] - and then reached further East to the Shevaroy Hills in the Salem district of Madras.

This scattered occupation of the various mountain masses followed from the fact that all the plantation crops were hill grown in the South. Coffee had been tried initially on the western coastal plain but it was gradually discovered that it grew best at between 2,500 and 5,000 feet.[4] Cinchona, for quinine, could be planted at from 2,500 to 6,000 feet, tea at from 3,000 to 6,000 feet, and though hevea rubber occupied lower slopes, the less popular ceara rubber could be grown at up to 5,000 feet.[5] Communications

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1. Speer, 1.
2. Ibid. 2, Griffiths 69-70.
3. Speer 2, Watt, II, 473.
4. E.G. Windle, Modern Coffee Planting, 10.
5. S.Playne, Southern India, 222-7. The cardamom fruit used as a spice and in medicine, and its oil for perfumery, was grown in damp shady places, such as in the gullies and ravines of estates given over to a more important planting crop, while pepper-vines were usually grown by the European planter as a minor product in conjunction with coffee.

would be one of the main problems, therefore, of all the plantation industries of the South.

The prospect which met the pioneering European coffee planter James Ouchterlony in the Wynaad region in the mid-1840's can be taken as representative: 'an expanse of dense undulating jungle ... reeking with malaria ... the whole of it ... an unbroken sheet of forest'. He found moreover 'no resident population within any accessible distance, no articles of food, no roads, no police and no law!'[1] Some forty years later when Randolph Morris came in his turn as the first coffee planter to the Biligiri-Rangan Hills situated slightly to the north east of the Nilgiris of which some former Wynaad areas formed a part, he set up his garden at an elevation of some 5,000 feet at a spot where the deciduous forest gave way to a magnificant evergreen jungle.[2] In a vast region almost without navigable rivers, where railways, even when they came, failed to connect with the planting areas even into the twentieth century, the European planter, once he had cleared his garden with the help of elephants, quickly found communications a major worry. Till Government stepped in he had to build or improve access roads himself, and garden produce was sent down to the coast or the distant railhead throughout the nineteenth century by pack bullock, pony, camel and porter, or sometimes by cart, and food and garden supplies were similarly brought up. Garden staff and labour had also to make the same journey, the European on horseback or in a munjil and the Indian by cart or by foot.[3]

It was the coffee industry which was the first South Indian planting industry to develop. Tradition has it that coffee was first introduced into India in the seventeenth century, by the Muslim pilgrim Baba Budan who had brought back with him from Arabia seven Mocha coffee seeds, which he then successfully planted in his home district in North Mysore, in the hills which later bore his name.[4] Bird droppings were then to spread the plant elsewhere in South India and account for the 'jungle produce' existent before systematic cultivation was undertaken. In the late 1790's British officials in Malabar and Salem set up experimental coffee gardens in those regions and, in Malabar, supplied seeds and plants to a few other enthusiasts.[5] Little

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1. Speer 264-7, W.Francis, Madras District Gazetteers. The Nilgiris., 14, 373-5. Ouchterlony was the brother of the military officer who had charge of the survey of the district in 1847, and himself, for a time, sat as a Judge at Ootacamund.

2. Speer, 148-9.

3. Ibid., 137-317. A munjil was a travel-hammock carried by bearers.

4. Watt, II, 465, Speer 184, L.Rice, Mysore and Coorg, II, 410.

5. Windle 3, Speer 184-5, Francis 170.

success ensued, however, and not until the eighteen twenties did European planters such as J.F. Jolly of Parry's and, notably, Thomas Cannon lease land in the Baba Budan Hills, where Indian coffee gardens already existed, open up gardens of their own, and so begin European planting in South India.[1]

Other European coffee planting pioneers were contemporaries or were gradually to follow those in North Mysore: in 1828 planting was introduced into the Wynaad, by 1829 land for coffee had been taken up in the Shevaroys, in 1838 a beginning was made in the Nilgiris, in 1843 the first European planter had come to South Mysore, and though the later 1840's showed no new areas opened up,[2] in 1854 South Coorg's first European coffee plantation was started and Central Travancore, the Nelliampathis in Cochin, and then the Anamallais followed in the sixties.[3] Fifteen years later European planters, interested more in cinchona at first, had in turn introduced coffee into the Kanan Devan area of North Travancore.[4] By the 1880's European coffee planters had also commenced planting in North Coorg and were likewise at work about this time in the South Travancore and Lower Palni regions.[5] (Coffee cul-

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1. Speer, 186. This South Indian initiative was prompted by successful coffee planting in Ceylon at that time and by a Bengal Government resolution of 7 May 1824 extolling the possibilities of extensive coffee planting. See Watt, II, 464-5; Report of the South of India Planters' Enquiry Committee, (hereafter in form SIPEC Report), 6, in India Rev. & Agric.Progs. Emigration, April 1897, A No.15; and P.P.H.L. No.56 of 1830 giving the 1824 resolution. Watt also notes coffee grown in the Wynaad in 1822 by an army officer.

2. Coffee planting in the country had still so little progressed at the time that in 1848 the Select Committee which was then investigating the condition and prospects of sugar and coffee planting in the British East and West Indies and Mauritius, did not even consider coffee planting in India. See P.P.H.C. 1847-8,XXIII.I.II.III., First to Eighth Reports from the Select Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting.

3. Francis 170, F.J. Richards, Madras District Gazetteers. Salem., 227, Elliot 4, Planting Opinion 12.10.1895, V.N. Aiya, The Travancore State Manual, III, 71, 74, Speer 252 and Imperial Gazetteer of India, Madras II, 455-6. Not all the early pioneers succeeded, and the European industry as such is considered to have started with Cannon's garden in Mysore, successfully established in 1830.

4. /Planting Opinion/, The Planting Directory of South India 1896, xxiii.

5. Planting Opinion 12.10.1895, UPASI progs. 1893, 1, UPASI Report 1894, 1. Exemplifying the maxim that nothing succeeds like success, Coorg even had a "Coffee King" of its own, namely Donald Stuart who had been the proprietor of forty coffeee estates there, (thirty three of them in his sole ownership), see Thacker's 1879, 417-19. For accounts of pioneer planting life in Coorg and Mysore see R.H. Elliot, Gold, Sport, and Coffee Planting in Mysore, chs. IX, X. As in the North the pioneers included a prominent Scottish element.

tivation had also been undertaken in Bengal and Burma in these years, but its acreage and outturn was insignificant.) Of Indian production of some 43 million lbs of coffee in 1879-80, from some 200,000 planted acres, the Madras Presidency had an outturn of 20 million lbs, Coorg 16 million lbs, Mysore 4 million and the Native States of Travancore and Cochin 3 million between them.

The overwhelming majority of the 46,000 coffee plantations in India in 1880 were under Indian control, but most were mere plots of some few acres; the really large gardens were held by Europeans,[1] of whom the vast majority, some two hundred, were British. Twenty years later in 1900 when coffee production had fallen by half, Europeans owned more than half the 245,000 acres in gardens varying 'from fifty to four to five hundred acres' while the remainder was under Indian ownership 'mostly in patches of from one to fifty acres'.[2]

Whilst coffee however was initially the most important South Indian planting crop, tea and cinchona had also been early planted by Europeans. The experiments with the China tea plants sent from Calcutta to the Nilgiris, Coorg, Mysore and the Agri-Horticultural Society at Madras in 1835 had proved a failure on the whole. In the Nilgiris, however, there had been a slight success, and it was in that region in 1854 that European tea planting was first commercially introduced.[3] Further development, however, was to remain slow, and this despite major pest and disease problems in the coffee industry. By 1880 the total tea output of Madras was only 645,000 lbs and that apparently almost entirely from the Nilgiris, where 79 tea gardens had 4,200 acres under tea. If additionally a small amount of tea was then grown on some of the coffee estates in Coorg, none was cultivated in Mysore.[4] (As in the North there had been a move over from planting China tea to that of the indigenous, Assam, variety, but the cultivation of a hybrid variety crossing the two, was also popular.)[5]

The planting of cinchona came later than tea, with the industry introduced into India, in the North as well as the South, following government experimentation in 1860-61. Though its technical problems were comparatively simple - centred around the stripping and drying of the bark of the cinchona tree - (the extracting of quinine and cinchona febrifuge from the

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1. StMMPr 1879-80, 44.

2. [Planting Opinion] The Planting Directory of South India 1902, i. A similar proliferation of numerous very small native gardens typified the tea industry in the Kangra Valley in the Punjab. See Chand 47-8.

3. SIPEC Report 7, Griffiths, 157, and Francis, 178 (who notes a trial planting in the Nilgiris in 1833 with tea plants imported direct from China). Secretary UPASI [A.G. Acaster], Planting Directory of Southern India (1940) 4, notes experimental tea-growing in Travancore in the 1840's and 1850's.

4. StMMPr 1879-80, 44, Madras Admin.Report 1880-81, 102.

5. Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency (1885), I, 292.

bark was done later after despatch) - and though on the Nilgiris its plantations had proved very successful, it attracted little enthusiasm among European planters, and by 1880 its peak period, the privately planted acreage was so small as not to warrant a mention in annual government reports.[1]

European enterprise and managerial skills had brought coffee, tea and cinchona planting into existence in South India, but it was Indian labour which made all three possible. A regular labour supply was thus vital. Once a coffee garden had been established, whether on land acquired from Government under the Waste Land Rules[2] or, as was distinctive of the South, on land bought or leased from Indian landowners,[3] though the planter supervised it was the Indian labourer who sowed the coffee seed, attended to the weeding, manuring, draining, supporting and sheltering of the young seedlings in the nursery, and transplanted the one year-old seedling. He had then to tend and prune the growing plant until in the second or third year it came into flower. Eight months later there were the ripe 'cherries' to be picked, with the help of the Indian women and children, the outer pulp to be removed from the cherries, and the 'berries' (the coffee seeds or beans) enclosed still in their parchment covering, to be packed and despatched to town, either inland or at the coast, for further processing.[4] (A whole coffee curing sub-industry grew up to handle the further processing, in which Coast Firms such as Peirce, Leslie & Co. in the South West, and Arbuthnot, Parry and Binny of Madras, were active. The Coast Firms - who also dabbled in coffee and other planting on their own account - further involved themselves in financing the planters and in shipping the coffee for export, and in due course, with the curers, in organising coffee auctions too.)[5] In short the European planting industry in southern India was all-dependent on its labour, like its counterpart in the North. Circumstances peculiar however to the South meant that the labour supply problem there assumed a somewhat different shape.

When European planting had first started on a small scale in South India,

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1. SIPEC Report, 7, Francis 183-4, Watt, II 293-5, 308-13, StMMPr 1880-1, 47, Madras Admin. Report 1880-81, ch.IV.

2. Elliot, 313-15 details the waste land grant system as worked in Mysore.

3. In Coorg, for example,: 'forest land was to be had either from Government for the mere asking, or by purchase from native holders'. See Rice, III, 36.

4. See Watt, II, 467-71, 475-8.

5. Speer, 193-204.

in Mysore,[1] the estates had been worked entirely by local labour. As the industry spread, however, to the Native States of Travancore and Cochin and to the Madras Presidency and Coorg in British India, the supply of local labour available for garden work was found to be inadequate except in the Salem, Madura and Tinnevelly regions[2] and thus planters in the Wynaad, the Nilgiris and Coorg started to obtain their (often experienced) labour from Mysore. The growing Mysore industry then found itself in difficulties too. Not only was its local labour quickly snapped up by other areas but that which remained was far more independent than it had been in the famine of the late 1870's, and such labour, relatively prosperous from former estate work, 'settled down to agricultural and other pursuits on their own account and in their own villages'. In consequence, Mysore itself had to seek labour elsewhere, in practice from districts in Madras, though planters also found a small labour supply from the Bombay Presidency. By the 1890's North Mysore estates employed labour only 3.5 per cent local. Some 26 per cent was imported from elsewhere in Mysore, and the remaining 71 per cent from British India. (The Lower Palni estates in Madura by contrast were using 86 per cent local labour, and 14 per cent from British India.) However such labour, though having to travel to the estates, was doing so in a South Indian region, which was still more or less familiar, a sharp contrast to the experience of the North Indian coolies who emigrated to Assam. Again, the coffee garden workers, because of the nature of the industry, usually came up to the gardens for only a nine months period or so, and then went back to their homes. If the obtaining of garden labour in Southern India was thus an easier process than in the North, the planters had to face severe competition. Not only was the North allowed to poach on labour supply fields in the South, but more importantly labour was attracted to emigrate to work in Mauritius, Natal, the Straits Settlements, Burma and Ceylon, the last named country, for example, taking 124,000 South Indian labourers in 1895.[3]

Once the need for non-local labour arose, maistries or foremen-contractors had to be employed whose role approximated to that of the garden sardars in

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1. This Native State was under British administration between 1831 and 1881. Control was then returned to native hands.

2. The conditions in these three localities were regarded as 'altogether exceptional' by virtue of the estates being within a few miles of towns and villages in a densely populated area.

3. SIPEC Report, chs. III and IV and Appendix IX. For an account of Indian labour emigration overseas in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries see H. Tinker, A New System of Slavery.

the North, though they were more independent and powerful. Maistries entered into an agreement with the planter to supply so many men, women ... and children for a certain time, usually nine months, but occasionally for up to two years for certain gardens in the Nilgiris. Out of the monies advanced by the planter, the maistry made an advance to the recruited labourers, and arranged food and transport for their journey up to the garden, on which he himself, or his representative, accompanied the recruited 'gang'. Once on the garden it was the job of the maistry or his representative to be responsible for the general welfare of the labourers, and in particular to exact due performance of their work for the period of their contract.[1]

Thanks to the demand for labour caused by the expansion of the planting industry in the South, coolie wages rose steadily, notably from the 1880's, and by the mid-1890's men were earning an average of 4 annas a day, women 2 annas 8 pies and children who could work, one to two annas. Piece work jobs, such as weeding, which could be performed outside regular working hours, added to the basic wage. Shelter and medical attention was provided for the labourer on the estate (there was a marked difference here though between European and native gardens), but though grain and condiments were sometimes sold to the labourers at cost price by the planter in times of scarcity, it was more usual for the labourer to provide his own food.[2]

But if securing labour did not prove quite so difficult as in North India, there were still problems for the planter and a need to discuss them with others and come together in an organised form for local mutual assistance and protection. With the poor roads in the interior, and the geographical isolation of the separate South Indian planting districts, it was district planting associations which sprang up in the first instance. One such local planting association was established in the Wynaad in 1857, the next in South Mysore in 1864, to be followed by the establishment of a Shevaroy Planters' Association in 1871, a Peermade Planters' Association in Central Travancore in 1874, a North Mysore Planters' Association in 1880, a Coorg Planters' Association in 1881, a Nilgiris Planting and Mining Association by 1883[3], a Kannan Devan Planters' Association in 1888, a (possibly

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1. SIPEC Report, ch. IV.

2. SIPEC Report ch. V. Though this planting enquiry report failed to distinguish coffee from tea labourers' wages, tea labourers it seems had higher wage rates than their coffee brethren, see Windle, 20. The rate for men in the 1890's, at Rs.7 as.8 a month was clearly higher than in North India.

3. A gold mining boom had been gripping the region.

restyled) Central Travancore Planters' Association in 1890 and a Nilgiri Planters' Association in 1891.[1] Two Native Planters' Associations had also been formed by the early 'nineties, in North and South Mysore.[2] And where at the start of the 1860's there had been some 100 British coffee planters in South India, and just a handful of compatriot tea and cinchona planters, by the mid-1890's there were 411 European planters in the twelve European planting associations in the South,[3] with some few individualist planters besides.[4]

In the 1860's and the next two decades, the European district planting associations had separately discussed such repetitive issues as the need for roads and bridges, more transient questions such as cinchona seed distribution or when a promised magistrate would arrive, and had separately raised their belated protests against the Ilbert Bill.[5] Communication difficulties apart, however, there were two other constant problems, namely coffee stealing, and the serious deficiences - in the planters' eyes - in the existing labour legislation, about which they had made repeated representations to Government. Thus in 1865 planters in the North and South Wynaad had unsuccessfully memorialised the Madras Government for a better labour law. A similar request by the Wynaad Planters' Association in 1876 as well

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1. Speer 1-3, 9, 262, 280, The Planting Directory of Southern India 1896, xxiii, Secretary UPASI /H. Waddington/, Planting Directory of Southern India (1924), 128-32, UPASI, UPASI Planting Directory - 18th Edition, 421-4, South of India Observer, 29.12.1877, 10.3.1883. The Kannan Devan Association superseded the planters' association in North Travancore which had been formed a few years earlier, the 1891 Nilgiri Association possibly replaced the earlier body in the area, whilst the Coorg region was by the 1890's to have separate associations for its northern and southern districts. By that time the Nelliampathies and Lower Pulneys Planting Associations had also come into existence, as evidenced by their representation at the annual conferences of South Indian planters then held.

2. The need for such native bodies was illustrated, for example, in the Kadur District of North Mysore where sixty thousand of the ninety five thousand acres under coffee in 1893 were in native ownership. See UPASI progs. 1893, 1, 23.

3. SIPEC Report, 4. The North Mysore Native Planters' Association had 55 members, but membership of the corresponding South Mysore Association was not reported.

4. By 1910 South Indian European planters who still remained outside of the district associations' membership were the subject of an appeal to join the fold, see UPASI Report 1910 14-15.

5. For a typical association meeting in the 1870's see South of India Observer 29.12.1877, and for a number of representative meetings in the mid-1880's see Indian Planters' Gazette July 1885 to June 1886.

as a joint memorial on the subject to the Government of India from a number of district associations a year later met with no better fortune, nor did the Wynaad planters' memorial to the Indian Government at the end of the decade. A petition of Mysore Planters in 1878 on the associated question of planters' rights in cases of extradition - coolies and maistries could flee from Native into British territory - was likewise unsuccessful.[1]

The legislation against which the planters pleaded was cumbersome, understandably so when labourers were migrating not only internally within the Madras Presidency, but also from there to Coorg, to the Native States, between districts within Native States, from one Native State to another, and from Native States into British India! In 1866 the Madras Government, awake to the growing but unsupervised emigration of labourers to other parts of India and to Ceylon, and influenced by the example of the two emigration Acts recently passed in Bengal had passed Act V of 1866 to regulate the manner in which garden labourers emigrating from Madras to other points in India were to be engaged and contracted. That Act however was to remain 'practically a dead letter as regards plantations in Southern India'[2], and it was a rare planter indeed who had ever heard of it, let alone used it. Instead planter-coolie relations in the South were governed overwhelmingly by the provisions of Act XIII of 1859 - an Act which had been intended at its inception for the benefit of urban employers needing to secure specific performance of service contracts entered into by their apprentices on receipt of an advance,[3] supplemented by ordinary civil law, a specific section of the Indian Penal Code and corresponding enactments in the Native States.

Confusion naturally arose as to what Act governed a particular court case - a Nilgiri planter in 1884 complained to Government that Act XIII was inoperative as then interpreted in courts in the Nilgiris and Wynaad[4] - but by the late 1880's despite all the representations two major weaknesses in Act XIII were still proving a source of bitter complaint. It was the custom for planters to advance lump sums to the maistries to cover their expenses and commission due to them and to provide small advances to each coolie they

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1. SIPEC Report 34-43, Griffiths 538.
2. SIPEC Report, 26.
3. Ibid. and StMMPr 1859-60, 4, 5.
4. SIPEC Report, 42.

recruited.[1] What Act XIII failed to do was to provide any quick, summary penal remedy should a maistry choose to pocket all or part of the sum furnished to him without supplying the stipulated number of coolies. It also failed to provide any power to extradite such a maistry - or a coolie who had accepted an advance but not fulfilled his contract obligations - if he slipped over the borders of the neighbouring Native States of Travancore or Mysore. It was possible to institute a regular civil suit against a defaulting maistry or coolie, but the process was a long one, and meanwhile the planter had lost his money and was without the labour he required. Moreover, to add insult to injury, if an exasperated planter now found other labour to do the work originally contracted for, but not done, he, in so doing, lost his right to compel specific performance from the defaulter![2] Planters in the Native States, likewise, suffered from the 'absence of any provisions for pursuing defaulting maistries and coolies into British India', so that North Mysore planters in the 1890's bore a loss of over three lakhs of rupees in irrecoverable advances.[3]

These unredressed grievances were the background to the feeling growing in many South Indian planting districts in the later 1880's 'that more combination was needed' and J.G. Hamilton, Honorary Secretary of the South Mysore Planting Association, accordingly tried in 1890 to form a 'Combined Association'. This scheme failed to attract sufficient support,[4] but in 1892 with the labour problem still acute, the first fully united action was achieved when in March 'a Memorial regarding Act XIII of 1859 and Extradition signed by the Chairman or Honorary Secretary of every Planters' Association in Southern India' was presented to the Viceroy Lansdowne through the Government of Madras.[5] The reply from Government, however, was 'curt

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1. The general theory was that the coolie who entered a contract would receive his full wage and repay out of that the advance received from the maistry. The maistry would then account to the planter for the expenditure of the lump sum given him by the planter for recruiting the gang. Some maistries gave smaller advances to the coolie than they put down in their accounts and pocketed the difference - easy enough since contracts were oral - though a maistry might also 'advance out of his pocket larger sums than he has received from the planter, to get specially good men or swell the number of the gang for which he receives commission'. See SIPEC Report, 17-18.

2. SIPEC Report 47, Griffiths 397-8, Speer 4, 5, Elliot 422-3.

3. SIPEC Report 56, 93.

4. UPASI progs. 1893, preface, 1.

5. Ibid., preface 1 and 71-4. The memorial was signed on behalf of the Planters' Associations in South Wynaad, Coorg, North Mysore, South Mysore, Travancore, the Shevaroys and the Kotagiri (Nilgiris) area.

and discourteous'. The South Indian planters were deeply irritated and on the initiative of D.T. Brett the Chairman of the North Mysore Planters' Association, firmly supported by G. Romilly the Honorary Secretary of the Wynaad Planters' Association, a South Indian planters' conference was convened and was held in the Cubbon Rooms, Bangalore in August 1893.

The Conference, which lasted from 28 August to 1 September and was attended by representatives of ten European South Indian planting associations,[1] the two Native planting associations in Mysore, and a representative each from the Kolar Mining Board and the commercial house of Binny and Company, dealt principally with the 'all important question' of Act XIII and the related matter of extradition, but discussed also such miscellaneous topics as land acquisition, coffee stealing, the game laws, the currency problem,[2] the registration of maistries, communications and planting industry representation in the Legislative Councils. The meeting agreed that a Government of India Bill to amend the Land Acquisition Act of 1870 and which proposed to equate the 'market value' of land compulsorily acquired by Government with the sum realised at auction must be considered 'to gravely compromise the rights of owners of property', and the Conference accordingly endorsed the December 1892 memorial on the Bill from the Nilgiri Planters' Association to Government.[3] Support too was given to the Nilgiri planters' petition to Government of March 1893 regarding the Coffee-stealing Prevention Act VIII of 1878 which allowed legal action to be taken by the planter against his employee or maistry found stealing coffee, but provided no legal remedy (other than by action in the regular courts), where such thefts were by persons not employed by the planter. A voluntary maistry registration scheme tried in the past having proved successful, the Conference - at which twenty five delegates and twelve other persons were present - decided to request Government to make such registration compulsory. As for representation in the Councils, the Conference here resolved that the planting interests ought to be represented in the Councils of Madras, Mysore and Travancore,[4] and that

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1. Namely the North and South Mysore, North and South Coorg, Wynaad, Nilgiris, Shevaroys, Kannan Devan, South Travancore and Nelliampathies Planters' Associations.

2. As the value of silver continued to decline South Indian planters (like their northern compatriots) were concerned lest too high an exchange rate should be fixed by Government, thereby striking a blow against them as exporters.

3. UPASI progs. 1893, 61, 112-14, India Bills Objects & Reasons 1894, Part I. The Bill eventually became Act I of 1894 with the former explanation of 'market value' deleted, and the term left undefined.

4. Nothing concrete was to emerge from the Mysore and Travancore representation proposals, see Griffiths, 541. (However the nominee of a district planting association sat in the Mysore State Assembly.)

the Conference President (Brett) should communicate with the Planting Member on the Indian Legislative Council to secure the latter's co-operation in dealing with South Indian planting issues. Above all however, the 1893 Conference supported the suggestion of its President for the formation of one 'Representative Chief Association for the whole of Southern India in addition to the already existing Planting Associations' and adopted a guide-line set of rules for discussion by the district associations individually.[1]

In 1894 the South Indian planters met again in central conference under Brett on 3 September with twenty one delegates this time representing twelve European and two Native district planting associations. During the first day with the passing seriatim of a complete set of rules for the new Association, 'the Conference ... ceased to exist'. Instead the United Planters' Association of Southern India came into existence,[2] and the meeting continued until 6 September as the first annual general meeting of UPASI.[3] The new body's rules, formally adopted on 4 September, fixed the UPASI headquarters at Madras, noted that the Association was intended to advance and protect South India planting interests and restricted its membership to recognised planting associations in the region.[4] In the North where the founding of ITA had followed that of district planting associations the control of the powerful Managing Agents over the industry had ensured that the ITA with its direct non-associational membership would dominate from the start. In the South, however, there was no such agency house control, nor for that matter any one existing planting body outstandingly suited to take the lead,[5] and the planters as staunch members of their own district bodies were loath to submit to central control, particularly as a number of planting industries were involved. A formal joint stand before Government however, was seen to be necessary - 'in unity lies our strength',[6] and the UPASI constitution accordingly provided for united action whilst leaving untouched fiercely

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1. UPASI progs. 1893, 1, 2, and 1-120, and Indian Planters' Gazette, 8.4.1893.

2. The UPASI inauguration date given in Speer, 16, as August 1894, is incorrect.

3. UPASI Report 1894, 1-11.

4. It was 1919 before 'firms and companies' were admitted as members, and much later again, 1937, before individual members were allowed to join. See UPASI Report 1919, iii and Speer 87, 112.

5. The three leading European South Indian planting associations in 1896, those of the Nilgiris, Coorg and North Mysore, had 70, 64 and 56 members respectively and the three which followed, South Mysore, Wynaad and Shevaroys, some 40 members each. See SIPEC Report, 4.

6. Remarks in circular letter (29.7.1893) of Brett to the district associations.

guarded local prestige. The resulting federation of equal status district associations, who conferred annually with each other on common problems, meant in practice that UPASI's hand was never very strong. Decisions of major importance discussed at an annual convention had thus to be referred to the district associations and at best would be resolved only at the next annual meeting. Still UPASI could provide a strong collective voice in speaking to Government. That the Madras Government, with whom it had most dealings, gave it due attention from the start was due to the fact that coffee then provided fifteen per cent of the exports of the province, second only to hides,[1] and to the fact that UPASI was speaking for a South Indian planting industry which covered 310,000 acres[2] and employed upwards of 200,000 coolies[3] and 12,400 maistries. If the value of the collective planting exports of the South, Rs.28,000,000, was below that of tea from Assam at Rs.50,000,000, nevertheless the South Indian industry's voice could also merit attention on an all-India government level.[4]

By 1896 UPASI's loose federation had settled to a regular working pattern. The separate district planting associations met regularly, handled their own local affairs and discussed matters of 'united' interest,[5] and sent delegates to the annual meetings of UPASI, which sundry planters also attended as visitors. Between AGM's the UPASI Chairman and Vice Chairman, together with the Secretary,[6] carried on the year round business of the Association in co-operation with the Madras Planting Member. (Following the 1893 Conference and further correspondence between UPASI and the Madras Government, the Governor of Madras, Lord Wenlock, had exercised his option under the recent Councils Act and had authorised appointment of a planting representative as an Additional Member of his Legislative Council.) At the annual meetings

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1. Annual Volume ... Sea-Borne Trade and Navigation ... Madras Presidency ... 1892-93., 5. Tea exports of some one per cent and the private proportion of the 0.6 per cent cinchona exports further slightly boosted the importance of the planters' share.

2. In thousands, Mysore 139, Madras 80, Coorg 74, Travancore 14, Cochin 3.

3. In thousands, Mysore 64, Madras 39, Coorg 55, Travancore 39, Cochin 3, excluding the Shevaroy and Kanan Devan estates for which figures were not reported.

4. SIPEC Report 8, 9, Appendices II, III.

5. See reports of Nilgiri Planters' Association meetings in Nilgiri News 23.7.1897, 26.11.1897.

6. L.D. Colledge (a North Mysore planter) had handled the early secretarial work in 1893, G.L. Yonge (an accountant) had been UPASI Secretary from 1894-96, to be then succeeded in August 1896 by Harry Ormerod (the manager of W.J. Eales & Co. a Madras firm of merchants and commission agents) who served as Secretary for the next sixteen years.

themselves part of the proceedings would be held in 'committee', consisting of the UPASI officers, the Planting Member, the previous Chairman and a representative from each district planting association. From 1899 when UPASI was formally incorporated, the committee members became the Council of the Association.

As was to be expected, UPASI first honoured those through whose initiative it had been brought into existence - Brett thus being the first Chairman and Romilly the first Planting Member. Thereafter the status consciousness of the district associations within UPASI ensured that the high offices were allocated to members of the various districts in turn, with preferential treatment for those with larger memberships. In 1894 when voting strengths in UPASI were fixed, five votes apiece were given to the Wynaad, Nilgiris, North and South Mysore and Coorg, the five Associations with the largest membership, three votes to the Travancore and North Mysore Native Associations, two to the Shevaroys and one vote to the small Association from the Lower Palnis. Romilly on completing his term of office in the Madras Council became UPASI Chairman, as did his successor as Planting Member H.P. Hodgson. The reverse situation, of an ex-Chairman becoming Planting Member was to be the more usual however.[1] The choice in either case, turned upon the member having sufficient means to allow himself the luxury of devoting considerable time in a voluntary capacity to UPASI affairs, as with the Nilgiri planter Hodgson, for example, who served two four year terms as Planting Member on the Madras Council (1896-1900 and 1904-08) and acted as UPASI Chairman for a year in the interim.[2]

As the Association developed however the Native representation therein faded out. Since their speeches at the 1893 Conference, the Indian representatives had been silent participators only, and in the UPASI year ending August 1899 both Native Associations were removed from the rolls, thereby leaving the united body without any specific Native Associations. The historian of UPASI has suggested that the Indian Associations themselves languished for want of continued support from their members, and that 'the severe depression which hit the industry in 1897-9 ... made the raising of

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1. G.L. Ackworth, Chairman 1896-7 thus served as planter representative in the Legislative Council in 1900-1904.

2. UPASI Reports 1894-1908. (Report dates relate to the year in which the AGM reported was held, but the printed proceedings of these meetings incorporated reports and correspondence relating to UPASI activities since the previous AGM).

funds ... almost impossible'.[1] But if the South Mysore Native Association, which represented 'nearly 16,000 native coffee planters', cultivating 35,000 acres, was seemingly dormant in 1896,[2] the North Mysore Native body, the public voice for coffee cultivators of 60,000 acres in 1893, was still in existence in 1909, but outside UPASI![3] Again even if funds were tight, the raising of an annual UPASI subscription ranging from a minimum of one anna per acre on one fourth of the area under cultivation to a maximum of one anna per acre on the total area under cultivation, as the UPASI decided in August 1897,[4] would surely have been a far from impossible task, should continued membership in UPASI have been keenly desired. Indeed had the members of the Native Associations chosen to pay even the minimum acreage subscription rate laid down in 1897 they would have enlarged their voting strength originally fixed at five out of a total of forty three. It is possible that the Native Associations, having satisfied their curiosity, decided that they would enjoy more independence outside UPASI. Equally, of course, they may have been deliberately frozen out - certainly the SIPEC Report had been much harsher about Indian than European planters and may have made UPASI membership uncomfortable.[5]

In early 1894 some of the representations to Government agreed at the 1893 Conference had been still under officialdom's consideration, but in April a 'very ignorant' Madras Government received a planters' deputation on Act XIII and made the important suggestion that the planters themselves should draft a Bill to meet their needs which Government would then consider. The 1894 AGM of UPASI therefore resolved that such a Bill, drafted by the Planting Member, Romilly, should be forwarded to Government.[6] But though the Madras Government received this well, and showed itself in 1895 to be sympathetic to UPASI's representations about the need for changes in Act XIII, in the extradition laws and in the Coffee-stealing Prevention Act, the Indian Government which had the final word, maintained 'an antagonistic attitude' towards the UPASI views on Act XIII and extradition, refusing in its letter of 1 May 1895 to the Government of Madras to consider amendments to existing legis-

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1. Speer, 13.
2. UPASI progs. 1893, 21, SIPEC Report, 4.
3. UPASI Report 1909, 8-13.
4. The annual subscriptions of the Native Associations had been North Mysore Rs.150 and South Mysore Rs.100. (With the UPASI's finances in a poor state in 1908 membership subscriptions were altered to eight pies per cultivated acre.)
5. SIPEC Report 16, UPASI progs. 1893, 21-3, UPASI Reports 1894-1899.
6. UPASI Report 1894, 2-93.

lation.[1] Accordingly the planters at the August 1895 AGM, decided that a direct address to the Viceroy himself was what Government's antagonistic response demanded.[2]

The direct address to the Viceroy Elgin was a success. The planters argued that the Indian Government's rejection of their request for greater protection against breaches of contract and the misapplication of advances had been due to the fact that the radical differences existing between labour employment conditions in northern and southern India had been inadequately explained, and they therefore suggested the appointment of a committee of enquiry. The Viceroy 'professed himself unwilling to refuse assistance to a great industry so long as there was room for doubt as to the material facts of the case' and accordingly ordered an enquiry which would also consider the amendment of the Coffee-stealing Prevention Act requested in the memorial.[3] As a result the South of India Planters' Enquiry Committee was set up in March 1896 to consider new legislation about both labour and theft. As the UPASI annual report for 1896 exults, the approach to the Viceroy 'has led to the Government of India taking, for the first time, an active interest in the condition of the labour laws affecting the planters of Southern India'.[4]

The three-man Enquiry Committee[5] commenced sitting at Ootacamund in mid-April and sent out questionnaires to the planting associations, to their members, and to some non-association planters, as also to government officials, various employers of labour and to maistries. At its twenty three sittings in Ootacamund and Bangalore it also examined oral witnesses. It presented its report, very promptly, in October.[6] The Committee did not feel any extension of the coffee theft legislation to include all persons and not just coolies and maistries was justified, considered that abolishing the advances

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1. SIPEC Report 46-9, UPASI Report 1895, 94-7, and India Rev. & Agric.Progs. Emigration, May 1893, Nos. 19-21, and May 1895, No.15 noting the Secretary of State's view that Act XIII was never intended to be applied to planting labour contracts, and that the Madras Government itself had been firmly against extending extradition legislation because of difficulties arising and the additional work load which would fall on Government officials wholly incommensurate with any advantages derived.

2. UPASI Report 1895, 2, 69-71. They also discussed the Ceylon import duty on Indian tea and other topics.

3. SIPEC Report, 1.

4. UPASI Report 1896, 4.

5. Its President was W.M. Young, Resident in Mysore and Chief Commissioner of Coorg, and the members J.W.F. Dumergue (an official) and J.W. Hockin (a Wynaad planter) nominated by the Madras Government and UPASI respectively.

6. SIPEC Report 5, 75.

system was impossible under existing circumstances,[1] recommended that Act V of 1866 should be amended to provide a suitable labour law for all the planting areas in South India, the Native States also being asked to adopt it, and that reciprocal arrangements between British India and the States should apply for its execution. It left over for possible future consideration the question of whether Act XIII should be declared inapplicable to plantation labour contracts once Act V had been amended.[2]

The UPASI annual meeting in August 1897 received with pleasure the Report's general conclusions, which it felt were 'strikingly favourable' to planting interests.[3] In 1898, though, the Association expressed dissatisfaction at the Indian Government's delay in issuing suitable orders following the Enquiry Report, and when in 1899 that Government gave the Madras Administration authority to proceed on the coolie labour question, the mandate given was only to put those Committee recommendations approved by it, 'into legal form ... for closer examination'.[4] It was thus a new Coffee-stealing Prevention Amendment Act, Madras Act II of 1900, (firmly backed in Council by Hodgson, the Planting Member), which was first passed into law, with UPASI approvingly noting that it embodied 'the chief suggestions made by the Association during recent years'.[5]

The labour law amendment took much longer to come to fruition, the issue 'hanging four or five years' before it passed into law as the Madras Planters Labour Act, Act I of 1903. As Acworth, the Planting Member, pointed out at the Madras Legislative Council meeting on 15 December 1902 - in successfully combating an attempt by three Indian Members of Council[6] to delay introducing the Bill because insufficient time had been given for consideration of the proposed measure - the Madras Government in consultation

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1. Emigrating labourers relied on the advances to pay off the moneylender, to leave maintenance money for their families, and to cover expenses on the journey up to the garden.

2. SIPEC Report 22, 59, 60, 75.

3. UPASI Report 1897, 5.

4. Government of India Resolution 21.1.1899 in India Rev. & Agric.Progs. Emigration, January 1899, No.35.

5. UPASI Reports 1898, 8-13; 1899, 2; 1900, 3-4, 9-14; Madras Leg.Cl.progs. 14.11.1899, XXVII, 357-63, and 27.1.1900, XXVIII, 69-106. To combat native receivers of the stolen coffee using their own tiny gardens as a cover for sales of coffee acquired by them illegally, the Act now made them accountable for coffee sales as well as coffee purchases. A garden labourer moreover had to account for parchment and cherry-dried coffee in his possession, and not merely green gathered coffee as before.

6. K. Perraju Pantulu Garu, P. Ratnasabhapati Pillai Avargal, G. Srinivasa Rao Avargal.

with the Indian Government had drafted the Bill in 1899, since when it had been 'going backwards and forwards between the Madras Government and the Government of India for three years' and that the planters had been very patient on the issue.[1] In the Madras districts to which the new Act applied - it was first introduced into the Wynaad and Nilgiri areas[2] - the Act superseded Act XIII. From a planters' point of view the Act seemed favourable in so far as it had a deterrent effect on defaulting labourers and maistries, who by its provisions would now be liable to imprisonment. Against this, however, had to be set the loss of the option of using Act XIII, the necessity for a formal written contract, the better protection by the new Act of coolie rights and enlarged powers of Government inspection,[3] all of which were less favourably regarded. In the Madras Council Ackworth, supported in the Select Committee by the other non-official European Additional Member, Sir George Arbuthnot,[4] had 'succeeded in getting certain amendments made in the draft bill, on lines suggested by different /district/ Associations', but had not been able 'to induce the Government to adopt all his suggestions'.[5] All in all the results of seven years' representations were by no means all favourable to the planters, and the 1903 UPASI Report stated that 'the Act as it now stands, has been widely criticised'.[6] Such criticism would long continue. The Wynaad Planters' Association called strongly for the withdrawal of the new Act from its district, whilst in the Nilgiris many planters who opposed the Act even called for Act XIII's reintroduction. Government however, whilst prepared to amend the Act in any way for which cause was shown, declared itself in 1906 unwilling to withdraw the Act from any district into which it had been introduced,[7] and in the outcome the Madras Government's suggested amendments to the 1903 Act found no welcoming concensus among the UPASI planters.

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1. UPASI Report 1902, 44, Madras Leg. Cl. progs. 15.12.1902, XXX, 207-8, and 3.3.1903, XXXI, 90-98. Amongst those additionally consulted before the Bill's introduction had been the Mysore and Coorg Governments.

2. Government had not introduced it into the Salem district following representations from the Shevaroy Planters' Association and UPASI.

3. Madras Act No. I of 1903, sections 2, 4, and ch. III.

4. Arbuthnot was a partner in the important merchant banking and agency house of Arbuthnot & Co. Both his own personal and his firm's planting industry interests were very great, as he informed Council.

5. UPASI Reports 1896-1902, ibid. 1903, 2, 26-51. Madras Leg. Cl. progs. 15.12.1902, XXX, 224-5.

6. UPASI Report 1903, 2.

7. Ibid., 1906, 9, 11, 82-89.

In 1910, UPASI resolved that the issue in future might only be put upon the AGM agenda if thirty days' notice had been given.[1]

In the decade after 1903 coffee exports fell, and though tea to some extent made good the loss, the two together formed only eleven per cent of total Madras exports, behind hides at eighteen, raw cotton at seventeen and oil seeds at thirteen per cent respectively.[2] Even so UPASI still carried considerable weight as the united voice of the planting interests. Internally, however, UPASI was split into factions by the nature of its membership. It was split territorially, each district producing some problems peculiar to itself, and it was split into segments according to the crop cultivated, each with its own varied history.

The coffee industry, pioneer in South India, had been falling back. In 1896 some 289,000 acres were under coffee in the region,[3] producing just over 26 million lbs of coffee. This was a much poorer return than the 35 million lbs from 237,000 acres of 1885, but acreage was to be cut back and output would fall still further to 245,000 acres and under 22 million lbs in 1900, as the average price (in London) of East Indian coffee[4] slumped from 101 shillings a hundredweight in 1894 to a disastrous 47 shillings six years later. These were difficult years for the industry as the almost universal hold of tea on consumers in Britain bit deep into the market for coffee which had, moreover, to be shared with Brazilian and Central American coffee and a variety of adulterated mixtures. The currency problem of falling silver prices in a largely gold standard western world had only worsened an already difficult situation. Not until 1907-8 did a slight revival of coffee's fortunes occur, when prices - largely controlled by supplies from Brazil and affected by 'cornerings' in the market - at last rose again somewhat. (Lowest quality East Indian coffee sold for 53 shillings a hundredweight in January 1908, some 40 shillings below its comparable 1894 price, but nevertheless 10 shillings higher than in January 1900.)[5] Meanwhile though the UPASI exhibit

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1. Ibid., 1906-1910.

2. Madras Admin. Report 1911-12, 174.

3. Coffee acreage elsewhere in India was minute.

4. There were no Indian quotations for coffee exports as sales were made when the consignments had arrived abroad.

5. Planting Opinion 11.12.1897; The Planting Directory of South India 1902, i, iv; Produce Markets' Review 20.1.1894, 27.1.1900, 25.1.1908; UPASI Report 1896, 63-5, and 1900, 3, 7; Speer 48, Playne 221-2, Heywood and Company, Limited 26-8. The drop in coffee acreage was not completely compensated for by new tea and rubber acreage. See UPASI Report 1907, 62-5.

won a Gold Medal for coffee at the 1900 Exhibition in Paris, proposals for a compulsory coffee cess to be used for advertising and boosting coffee sales had failed to attract support, while within UPASI the rivalry of coffee and tea in a period when both industries were depressed was reflected in acrimonious criticism exchanged between the two interest groups at successive annual meetings.[1]

However, the problems of coffee in South India could not be resolved, as they had been in Ceylon, by a wholesale shift into other plantation crops. Cinchona had been introduced from South America in 1860-61 and had been cultivated by both Government and individual planters. It had received a boost in the 1860's and 1870's as first the coffee borer beetle and then the coffee leaf disease carried from Ceylon had wreaked havoc in the South Indian coffee plantations,[2] but overproduction from the 1880's for a poorly paying, narrow market led to its cultivation ceasing to be attractive.[3] The 13,000 acres under private cultivation in 1888-89 and 11,000 acres in 1895-6 dropped sharply to 5,000 acres the following year as prices for quinine and bark both collapsed.[4]

Tea, first tried out in the later 1830's, was a more substantial alternative to coffee, the first commercial-scale planting commencing in the Nilgiris in the 1850's. But even though the author of a Nilgiris guide had stressed in 1857 that 'sufficient attention has not been bestowed upon it at any place',[5] some thirty years later, in 1890, there was still less than 12,000 acres under tea in all South India, only 31,000 acres in 1900, and in 1913, 64,000 acres. (Of this total more than 13,000 acres in North Travancore

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1. Report ibid. 1901, 18-25, Speer 36. In 1907 a compulsory coffee cess proposal sparked off by the Coffee and Cocoa Trade Section of the London Chamber of Commerce, received wider UPASI support, but the Indian Government's attitude was unfavourable and no legislation resulted. See UPASI Reports 1907-1911, London C/Comm Report 1906, 60, Speer 49, 50.

2. Speer 270, W.K.H. Langley ed., Century in Malabar, 28.

3. There had also been some switch into gold mining in the late '70's in the Wynaad area, but this too proved short-lived and a crash came by 1883.

4. Langley, 28-9, The Planting Directory of South India 1896, xxiii and ibid. 1902, ii, Playne, 221, 228, StMMPr 1888-89, 129, ibid. 1895-96, 111-12 and 1896-97, 117. The annual official statistical abstracts, relating only to British India, showed a coffee acreage decline of from 134,000 in 1900-01 to 92,000 in 1912-13. See Statistical Abstract ... 1893-94 to 1902-03. Table 115, and ibid. ... 1903-04 to 1912-13. Table 119.

5. R. Baikie, The Neilgherries, 95.

by 1908 had been built up in holdings largely controlled by the James Finlay & Company group.) These acreages were small in relation to the area under coffee, and the production of tea was only a tiny percentage of total Indian tea output - 5 million lbs in 1900 as compared with 192 million in the North, and 22 million lbs in 1913 as against 285 million lbs.[1]

Moreover since tea, too, was under pressure upon profit margins in these years, its growth was only a partial solution to the problems of the planter. A little pepper and cardamoms were also planted by UPASI members, but the one significant new crop, which emerged on a more than experimental level only after 1900, was rubber. The popular hevea variety could be grown on the lower slopes of the hills, in the western rain forest belt, and most of the South India planting at the start was in the well suited Mundakayam area of Travancore. There a local Rubber Planters' Association had been formed in 1906 which joined UPASI the next year, by when rubber planters in the South had planted 57,000 acres (hevea 44,000 acres, ceara 13,000). Their annual rubber export was up to 2.6 million lbs by 1914 which must be compared, however, with Malaya's exports of 47,000 tons or over 100 million lbs.[2] Even at that date, however, in South Indian planting circles coffee remained king.

One effect of the depression experienced at the turn of the century[3] was to give new impetus within UPASI to earlier moves to combine with other bodies in India and Britain.[4] As early as September 1894 Brett, the Chairman, had strongly urged that UPASI combine with the northern associations, the ITA and BIPA, as many of their problems had much in common. Shortly after this there had been correspondence with the ITA in Calcutta stressing UPASI's willingness to join forces with the ITA 'in the promotion of any measures

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1. Planting Directory of Southern India (1940), 4, The Planting Directory of South India 1902, ii, Speer 315, 329, Griffiths 144, 158-9.

2. Planting Directory of Southern India (1924) 130, ibid. (1940) 4, Speer 210-28, Playne 224, UPASI Report 1907, iii, 7, Anstey 288, J.H. Drabble, Rubber in Malaya 1876-1922, 104, 219. Full details of the South Indian rubber yield in 1914 do not appear to have been recorded but, as an indication, the 19,600 acres then under hevea rubber in Travancore yielded 2,000,000 lb. Around 50,000 acres were also under rubber in Burma at this period. For an account of the introduction of rubber trees into India, by Government in the 1870's, see R.L. Proudlock, Report on the Rubber Trees at Nilambur and at Calicut, South Malabar, 4-6.

3. As Speer 48-9 notes, further effects had been a shift in the weight of UPASI membership from the northern to the southern districts, and a similar shift in garden ownership, gradual as yet, from the private proprietor to the public company.

4. One instance of the new sense of solidarity felt between South and North Indian planters at this period may be seen in the support given by the UPASI to the ITA over the latest Assam Emigration Bill and in the stream of resolutions passed by the UPASI district associations expressing sympathy with the Assam planters over Chief Commissioner Cotton's 'insult' to them.

tending to the general good of the Planting community in India'. That move, though, did not come to fruition. However an indirect link was effected since Brett's other proposal for an affiliation of UPASI with the London Coffee Association led on to an affiliation in 1895 with the London Chamber of Commerce. In the London Chamber UPASI was represented by the Honorary Secretary of the London Coffee Association.[1] In 1900, as both coffee and tea sharply felt the effect of world depression UPASI resolved to contact the ITA, the Ceylon Planters' Association, the Chambers of Commerce in India, and leading tea and coffee brokers and merchants in India, England and her Colonies to see whether there was 'a movement in favour of a commercial combination of Great Britain and her Colonies and India against the world', in short a movement for the introduction of a system of Imperial Tariff Preference.[2] The UPASI initiative was an ambitious move indeed, which assumed more importance when Britain's Colonial Secretary Joseph Chamberlain came out strongly in favour of Imperial Preference,[3] and it occupied the UPASI in one form or another until 1905 when the ITA(L) expressed the view that no progress could be effected on preferential British tea duties till after the next election.[4]

The far ranging preference movement typified the way in which UPASI's concerns ranged from the small to the large. Indeed by the first decade of the twentieth century so broad was the range of topics and interests to be covered that from September 1906 the Association felt it necessary to publish its own paper The Planters' Chronicle to keep its membership fully informed. (The Planting Opinion owned by Duff & Co. of Madras, in which UPASI had taken space, had ceased publication, and while the Madras Mail and the Madras Times were sympathetic to the planters' viewpoint, planting interest concerns were marginal to them.)[5] In 1906-07 another important move was tried, the sub-

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1. UPASI Reports 1894, 57; 1895, 112-17, 137-140; 1896, 6-106; 1914, iii, London C/Comm Report 1895, 15, Griffiths, 542. The Secretary concerned, J.C. Sanderson, held the representation from 1895-6 to 1912-13, latterly as a joint representative.

2. UPASI Report 1900, 75.

3. See Times 16.5.1903 reporting Chamberlain's important speech at Birmingham the previous day. Chamberlain had first propounded the idea of Imperial Preference in 1896.

4. UPASI Reports, 1900-1905. In 1907 the ITA(L) was to urge upon the Secretary of State for India the preponderant claims of India for most favourable consideration at the impending Imperial Conference. For some discussion of India considered in an Imperial Preference context see Anstey, 286-400.

5. UPASI Report 1904, 83-4, Speer 61, Madras Rev.Progs. March 1899, No. 1015 Mis.

stitution of Bangalore for Madras as the UPASI office centre so as to be nearer the planting centres. This if complete, would have meant a withdrawal from the seat of the provincial government and so for a decade from 1908-09 the Association maintained two offices, one at Madras - moved to Parry's Buildings in 1910-11 - and the other at Bangalore at 25 South Parade. Bangalore remained the centre for its annual meetings, however, held between July and September to coincide with the race weeks there.[1] Like BIPA it thus contrived to combine business and pleasure for its members, for Bangalore was the sporting, social and shopping centre most convenient for the majority of them. UPASI activity and initiative was hampered, however, by an unfortunate choice of Secretary, for Ormerod who held the post from 1896 to 1912 was not only allowed, like Madge in the Defence Association, to work at two jobs, but proved an inefficient manager. He was severely criticised for his disordered office and for his failure to maintain proper accounts. The loss of Rs.17,000 which UPASI suffered when its bankers Messrs Arbuthnot & Company crashed in November 1906 was something which could not readily have been foreseen, even by a better businessman, but UPASI's finance committee rightly complained that with Ormerod they did not know where they stood, which was hardly surprising when the Secretary - whose many faults included having the office lease in his own name and poorly managing the South Indian Planters' Benevolent Fund - felt that filing was superfluous! Ormerod eventually resigned as Secretary in the summer of 1912,[2] being succeeded by Fletcher Norton who had been a South Mysore delegate and was now giving up active planting. Norton too, however, was allowed to do private work, UPASI having first call on his services, an arrangement which, if economical had its disadvantages.[3]

One obvious disadvantage of employing a part-time Secretary was that representations to Government or briefings for the UPASI nominee on the Indian Tea Cess Committee or the Planting Member in Madras, could obviously not be very adequately prepared.[4] It was perhaps well, therefore, that the Planting Members in the Madras Legislative Council though diligent in attendance took a restricted view of their function. They were active when a planting measure was under discussion or the budget, at times addressed Government and met

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1. UPASI Reports 1906, 120, ibid. 1907-1919, Speer 3, 19, 20.

2. Probably in July.

3. UPASI Reports 1907, 6; 1912, 5, 22-28. Norton was to have a monthly salary of Rs.400 plus half share of the profits of The Planters' Chronicle.

4. The representatives of the South Mysore Planters' Association in the Mysore State Assembly (see Elliot, 61) may even not have been briefed by UPASI at all.

officials on occasion, but it was rather typical of their approach that Hodgson in 1904 should report to the UPASI annual meeting that since the Council meetings he had attended had no business of interest to planters he had 'nothing to say by way of a report'. Moreover if J.G. Hamilton in 1911-12 did his best 'to keep in touch with everybody' including the Indian members of Council, and had a number of personal interviews on the subject of labour emigration overseas - which hit landowners as well as planters - this was a personal initiative, rather than a response to UPASI promptings.[1]

With diligence therefore rather than initiative, let alone political sophistication, thus manifested by its Planting Representative, it is hardly surprising that the UPASI, as a body, seems to have taken no interest in its early years in the work of the Indian National Congress, preferring indeed to remain aloof even from a connection with the Defence Association when approached.[2] This of course was not to say that South Indian European planters as individuals were not (scornfully) aware of Congress's existence.[3] On the Indian side less reticence was shown. If the attitude towards European planters in the South seemed slightly less bitter than in the North, this may have been caused by the existence of large numbers of Indian coffee planters, and by the comparative rarity of planter-coolie assault cases making the headlines. In fact the conviction of the Travancore planters Baillie and McGowan in 1901 for causing the death by beating of a native servant, was cited by the Voice of India as the first proven case in the area, to be looked upon therefore as a regrettable lapse as opposed to any norm.[4] Nevertheless, the Madras weekly United India referred to the Madras Planters Labour Act of 1903 as the Slave Bill, whilst the Kaiser-I-Hind in Bombay averred that the lot of a convict in jail was better than that of a garden coolie.[5] In the Madras Council G.L. Acworth, the Planting Member, vigorously refuted the suggestion that the South Indian European planters 'were a set of stupid and brutal slave drivers'. He conceded that there were indeed 'some black sheep', as in every large community but by nobody were they more deplored or more severely condemned than by the general body of planters.[6]

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1. See reports of Planting Members given in UPASI Reports 1900-1912.

2. The call, in 1908, for South Indian European planters to join the EAIDA, is discussed further in chapter V.

3. See Elliot, 81-90.

4. Voice of India, 21.9.1901.

5. Ibid. 21.3.1903 quoting United India 3.3.1903, Kaiser-I-Hind 8.3.1903.

6. Madras Leg. Cl. progs. 3.3.1903, XXXI, 90. In passing, Acworth revealed that it was the planters themselves who broke the old slavery system existing in Mysore.

Such interventions to defend the planters' record were not often required. The looser pattern of work, with annual contracts and movements from village to gardens and back, made allegations of slavery in South India not very credible, as even the Indian Press conceded.[1]

By contrast to such occasional arguments roads and communications were a subject perennially under discussion in UPASI, one on which representation to Government or District Board was a regular occurrence. In the nature of things, however, it was the district planting associations themselves which had to define their needs and the role of the UPASI was rather that of vigorous supporter. In 1894 it was resolved that the UPASI 'do assist any Constituent Association in [the] Native States in bringing pressure to bear on Government to attend more readily to applications for roads and communications', and notices to that effect were later sent to the Dewans and Residents in Mysore and Travancore. In 1895 the UPASI Secretary was instructed to write to the Madras Government supporting the request of the Lower Palnis planters for better roads and communications in their district. On occasion, however, the Association initiated action for the wider good, addressing the Indian Government thus in 1898 on 'the paramount necessity of spending certain sums each year out of Imperial funds on opening new and improving existing roads in all districts where a considerable extension of cultivation is possible'. In 1908, despite UPASI pressure both the Madras and Mysore Governments rejected proposals to construct a railway from Arsikere in the Hassan District of Mysore to Mangalore on the West Coast which would have benefited Coorg as well as Mysore planters. But success in securing even much smaller projects such as a bridge over the Theni river in Madura required sustained UPASI effort. Sometimes, UPASI could not act effectively because of the diversity of its membership: when asked by the Madras Government in 1901 for its opinion on the site for a proposed West Coast port, since each district association asked for a different port, UPASI 'preferred to leave it' to Government to make a decision. UPASI pressure for reduction in freight rates was more successful, as was marked by the concession given for coffee by the South Indian Railway. (No attempt however seems to have been made by UPASI to consult with the Madras Chamber of Commerce on such problems. Links with that not very vigorous body consisted of the occasional letter, such as

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1. See Rast Goftar 8.3.1903 disputing the view that the Madras Planters Labour Act would 'reduce the labourers to the conditions of mere slaves'. The Press indeed might properly have reviewed the way in which native labour contractors and middlemen operated had they wished to correct abuse in the industry.

that from UPASI on the Imperial tariff scheme and from the Chamber on the increase of French import duties in 1900 which it was attempting to have withdrawn.)[1]

Agricultural matters in their variety also took up much time at UPASI annual meetings, and in 1909, following the precedent of its sister planting associations in the North, and backed by government, UPASI set up a Scientific Office under the management of R.D. Anstead, an agricultural chemist. By 1914 the Scientific Department, as it was by then called, had proved its worth, and with Government still backing the scheme it was decided at a March 1914 Extraordinary General Meeting to enlarge the department and make scientific work a permanent part of the Association's structure.[2]

However, as in the North, it was labour which was always the most constant worry. By 1909 labour and emigration had become 'undoubtedly the greatest question of the day', and the activities of the Ceylon Labour Commission, which was by then working as a forwarding agency in recruiting Indian coolies for the planting estates in Ceylon, was arousing the general ire of the UPASI membership. Concern was expressed, too, about labour being enticed to the Straits Settlements and other Colonies by 'unscrupulous Agents' who waylaid coolies en route to the South Indian plantations. (Anger heightened further in 1911 when the Ceylon Commission's agents were found to have audaciously proceeded to crimp coolies who had already taken advances from South Indian estates - no doubt a contributory reason why a closer liaison with the Planters' Association of Ceylon, tentatively under way in 1909, failed to develop.) Through the years 1909 to 1913 labour difficulties dragged on: the 1913 Chairman (E.L. Mahon, from Coorg) merely echoed his predecessors when he declared 'the one point of importance during the past year has been the Labour question'. At last, however, the matter was brought to a head, and, following voluminous discussions at the annual meeting and in the district branches, the delegates at the important March 1914 Extraordinary Meeting[3] resolved that UPASI set up its own Labour Department, the more effectively to bring the labour supply problem under control; the decision was regarded as the most momentous in the annals of the Association to date.[4]

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1. UPASI Reports 1894-1909.

2. Ibid. 1908-1912; 1913, 86-93; 1914, 47-54 and Extraordinary ... Meeting progs. 30-44; Madras Rev.Progs. 1908, Nos. 37-9 (Press) and May 1910, No. 1750 (Mis.).

3. The meeting went on for two days, 11 and 12 March.

4. UPASI Reports 1909-1913; 1914, 2 and Extraordinary Meeting ... progs. 1-30; and Speer 63-4.

The non-official Europeans in the South of India were interested not only in coffee, tea, cinchona and rubber, but in that other great agricultural commodity cotton, too. Exports of raw cotton were more important, in value, than any of the plantation products, but the European interest in cotton was not that of producer, but of merchant, processor - by the introduction of cotton screws and steam presses and powered cotton gins[1] - and manufacturer. In 1876 and 1881 the House of Binny had established the Buckingham and Carnatic Mill Companies in Madras and other European mill companies were to follow between 1883 and 1889 at Papanasam and Tuticorin in the Tinnevelly District, and at Madura and Coimbatore. In Mysore too, at Bangalore, a mill handling cotton, wool and silk, passed into Binny's control in 1886.[2]

In the early years, however, the real heart of the trade and manufacture of cotton lay in Bombay. Here the driving of a cart road over the Bhore Ghat in the 1830's, and of railways by the 1860's, towards the cotton growing tracts of the Deccan and Gujarat, and the ease with which labour could be attracted by coastal shipping from the Konkan had combined to make the city the key to the trade in raw cotton to Europe and the Far East, and of yarn to China and Japan.[3] By 1854 the several steps from trade to manufacture had been taken and the first cotton spinning mill was under construction. The stages were neatly embodied in the career of the pioneer, Cowasji Davar, who from cotton brokerage moved successively into banking, steam navigation, steam-powered cotton pressing and cleaning and so to that first factory, the Bombay Throstle Mill.[4] By 1859 three more mills were in operation and by 1862 six others were under construction,[5] and once the distortion of the market caused by the American Civil War had been smoothed out, and the Suez Canal had been opened, further growth was rapid, both in spinning and weaving, the nine mills at work in Bombay City in 1869 (out of the sixteen then in India) becoming

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1. In Bellary European cotton presses had been operating since 1871.

2. F. DeSouza, The House of Binny, 84-103; W. Francis, Madras District Gazetteers. Bellary., 109-110.

3. M.D. Morris, The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force in India, 14, 17, M.L. Dantwala, A Hundred Years of Indian Cotton, 22-3, S.D. Saklatvala, History of the Millowners' Association, Bombay. 1875-1930, 16.

4. M.D. Morris, 23-4, Saklatvala, i. Though between 1817 and 1830 three isolated cotton mills had been started in India, and one in Calcutta and one in Pondicherry were still in existence at the time the Throstle Mill was built, the foundation date of the industry in India is regarded as 1854. See Mehta, 1-7.

5. S.D. Mehta, The Cotton Mills of India: 1854 to 1954, 233, M.D. Morris 24-5.

forty three mills in the Presidency in 1880 operating over a million spindles and nearly thirteen thousand looms, with a workforce of thirty five thousand. Outside Bombay in 1880 only thirteen cotton mills were at work in India, operating less than a thousand looms in all.[1]

What was distinctive about the Bombay mill industry - and later that of Gujarat - was the lead taken by Indian entrepreneurs.[2] Bombay's trade had always been cosmopolitan, and it was typical that the Bombay Chamber of Commerce, founded in 1836, was a joint Indian and European creation.[3] European founded cotton mills were quite late in appearing in Bombay, though European firms trading in raw cotton were long the dominant influence.[4]

The other distinctive feature of the cotton industry, marking it off from all the plantation industries earlier considered, was the absence of any labour recruitment problem. As M.D. Morris has demonstrated, labour shortages, except at the skilled labour level, were never a problem in Bombay, whose population grew at astonishing speed.[5] When the very individualistic cotton manufacturers were driven to organise in 1875-76, when the Bombay Mill-owners' Association was formed, it was to resist the pressures exercised on Government from outside India by their rivals in Lancashire.

From an early date Lancashire manufacturers had noted with alarm the growth of an Indian industry, though it did not really trench upon their markets since it produced yarn rather than cloth, and both at counts much coarser than those to which the Lancashire industry was geared. In 1874, however, Lancashire interests were sufficiently worried to press for the repeal by the Indian Government of its revenue tariffs of $3\frac{1}{2}$ and 5 per cent imposed upon imported yarn and cloth, and to agitate for the imposition of Factory Act legislation to curb hours of working and the employment of women

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1. Mehta, 28-32, 30-1, Saklatvala, i, 7. References herein to Bombay City include the Island area.

2. 'Prominent among the mill-owners were the Bhatias, while Englishmen, Parsis, Jews and Mahomedans brought up the rear. Up-country mills were largely Indian owned'. See P.P. Pillai, 'The Indian Cotton-Mill Industry 1853-1922', Indian Journal of Economics Oct. 1924, V Part 2, 130.

3. M.D. Morris, 15.

4. Two features may in part explain this anomaly - the comparatively low initial investment required to establish cotton mills, and the far greater acquaintance with world markets which European firms trading in cotton enjoyed.

5. M.D. Morris, 51-62. As this historian notes, even the great bubonic plague of the late 1890's failed to dry up the labout supply, causing at worst but temporary disruption.

and children in Indian mills.[1] The response in Bombay was to organise collectively to resist such interference. Accordingly John Gordon, the Bombay Chamber of Commerce Secretary, 'an experienced banker ... possessing great mercantile experience', was selected to set up a defence organisation, and out of his efforts was born on 1 February 1875 the Bombay Mill-owners' Association[2] whose first task was to act on the tariff and factory legislation issues.[3]

At the start, despite their smaller numbers, European interests in this Association were noticeably deferred to by the Indian millowners. Between 1875 and 1879 the BMA's Chairman was H. Maxwell of Nicol & Co. (a firm among the pioneer cotton pressing companies of India), he being following in 1879-80 by J.A. Forbes of the banking house of Forbes & Co. It may be assumed, perhaps, that these early choices were intended to open convenient channels of communication with Government. But the growth of Indian confidence, born of the role of Indians in municipal and provincial affairs, made such links less necessary, and from 1880 to 1892-93 the chairmanship was held by (Sir) Dinshaw M. Petit, though he was followed by (Sir) George Cotton till 1901, and then by the latter's partner J.R. Greaves in the next two years.[4] The eminent early European Chairmen apart[5] the merely supporting role of the Europeans in the Association was soon well established. In 1875-6, the BMA's founding year, there were three Europeans and seven Indians in the ten-man Committee; in 1883-4, there were only two Europeans on the enlarged Committee. In 1889-90 there were still only two Europeans, but fourteen Indians, on the Committee, and this preponderance of Indian members of the Committee held down to the First World War.[6]

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1. The humanitarian aspect stressed in the call for an Indian Factory Act, hid the real concern, at growing Indian competition. The pressure exerted, initially unsuccessful was to attain a more substantial reward in 1878.

2. Referred to in short in this work as the BMA.

3. Mehta 35, Saklatvala i, 1, BMA Report 1875, 5. In the years to follow the Bombay Chamber's Secretary and Assistant Secretary were to serve in similar capacities with the Mill-owners' Association whose offices were in the same "Graham's Buildings". This Association, together with the Bombay Cotton Trade Association at the same address, (see below this chapter), was affiliated to the Bombay Chamber in 1903, both associations, however, later separating therefrom (the Trade Association in 1917 and the BMA in 1924), see R.J.F. Sulivan, One Hundred Years of Bombay, 279.

4. The ten year hold of Greaves, Cotton & Co. on the chairmanship was a reflection of the importance of the firm. In 1910, some half a century after its foundation, the business had around 10,000 employees and was the largest employer of factory labour in India. Indian Textile Journal, April 1910, 221.

5. After 1902-3 the European occupation of the chairmanship declined in frequency.

6. Saklatvala, 2, 5, 70, Thacker's 1894-1914.

In their supporting role, despite the occasional difference, as on the Ilbert Bill question - the controversy over which in Bombay took a very muted form, the Europeans in the BMA worked harmoniously with their Indian counterparts 'in the best interests of the industry as a whole'.[1] Thus in 1878 Indian and European millowners joined forces to protest to the Indian Government when under continued pressures from Britain various classes of cotton imports were exempted from duties. Both parties of course were aghast when the Indian Government, in 1882, abolished import duties on cotton under the Free Trade policy it adopted; a policy which was largely the fruit of Lancashire agitation. Again Maxwell was at one with his Indian colleagues who presented evidence to the Bombay Factory Inquiry Commission of 1875 in emphatically agreeing that 'no case had been made out in favour of factory legislation'. The two official Commissioners had held that 'a simple legislative enactment would be beneficial'. Maxwell as a member of the Factory Commission joined with his three Indian colleagues on the Commission (like him cotton mill industry leaders) in stating bluntly that 'legislation in any shape is not necessary'.[2] The Indian Factories Act, Act XV of 1881, was passed, however, despite the joint protest.[3]

The 1881 factory legislation introduced a period in which such legislation was to be a main concern of the BMA. In 1882 W.O. Meade-King Inspector of Factories, Bombay, after seeing the Act in operation proposed amendments to it. A further Bombay Factory Commission was accordingly appointed in 1884. It reported in 1885, largely endorsing Meade-King's suggestions for extended factory legislation. Two years later Parliament considered the expediency of extending English Factory Act provisions to India. The proceedings of the Berlin International Labour Conference of 1890 had been drawn to the Indian Government's attention by the Secretary of State and acted as a further spur to the Government of India to amend the existing factory legislation. As a preliminary step it appointed another enquiry commission - this time an all-India, all industry one, the Indian Factory Commission of 1890. Both European and Indian factory owners alike shared the BMA's view that 'foisting

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1. The first object of the BMA, after all, had been that of 'encouraging friendly feeling and unanimity among millowners and users of steam and water power on all subjects involving their common good'.

2. See Report of the Commissioners ... to Inquire into the Condition of the Operatives in the Bombay Factories, ..., 2, 3.

3. Saklatvala 1, Mehta 35-39, 124, Anstey 261, 345-6. The Act laid down provisions for safety regulation and concerning the employment of child labour.

on India a Factories Act on the lines of the English Act' was inadvisable, but active opposition was neither vigorously sustained nor co-ordinated. (Indeed when the Indian Jute Manufactures Association enquired of the BMA what steps it was taking to counter agitation in Britain for factory legislation in India, the BMA's response was so luke-warm that the Jute body decided to take no further action.)[1] Government therefore was enabled quickly to push through the 1891 Factory Act based upon the 1890 Commission's findings.[2]

Where the 1881 Act, (from whose provisions indigo, tea and coffee factories were exempted), had prohibited the employment of children under seven, the new Factories Act, India Act XI of 1891, raised this lower age limit to nine, and also lowered the maximum hours of work for children. The Act also restricted the hours of work of female labour, and as a quite novel requirement stipulated a weekly day off for all employees. At the same time the Act greatly widened the application of these provisions by bringing all factories employing 50 persons or more, or at Local Government's discretion 20 or more within its scope, where the old Act had only applied to factories with 100 or more workers.[3]

The passing of the 1891 Factories Act led the BMA to call a general meeting to draft 'a uniform code of rules for the observance and guidance of work people', but this was never formally accepted.[4] If the effort made to agree to a common scheme of short-time work during the trade depression of the late 1880's and the early 1890's was successful - though notably a fair sized minority of BMA members remained reluctant to toe the line, that to standardise - and lower - wage rates in 1891 and 1893 failed badly, demonstrating that the BMA lacked the teeth to impose a common policy upon its members.[5]

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1. Indian Jute Manufactures Association Report 1891, 2-3.

2. W.O. Meade-King, Report on the Working of the Indian Factories Act in Bombay; Report and Proceedings of the Commission appointed to consider the Working of Factories in the Bombay Presidency; Leg. Cl. progs. 31.1.1890, XXIX, 18; Saklatvala 9; Anstey 297-8.

3. In regard to female labour, however, M.D. Morris 65-9 points out that in the Bombay mills - though not those of Gujarat - the use of female labour had always been comparatively unimportant, being restricted to operations not geared to the use of power-driven machinery.

4. M.D. Morris 106-7 and quoting BMA Report 1891.

5. Saklatvala 11, 12, M.D. Morris 166-7. The partial success of the short-time working scheme was probably due to the fact that mill owners clearly saw the futility of over-producing in a depression; the failure of the wage rates proposal may possibly have been caused by a reluctance of employers to reveal to their competitors the wages that they were paying.

In the early 1890's the BMA did co-ordinate the Bombay millowners' opposition to the closing of the mints to the coinage of silver, designed to arrest the fall in the gold value of the rupee, because it restricted credit and caused serious dislocations in orders for China and Japan;[1] and it did so again - but with no more success - when the financially hard-pressed Government of India which had imposed a 5 per cent duty on imported cotton cloth and yarn was compelled by the Home Government to impose a countervailing excise duty on the finer grades of Indian yarn to protect Lancashire interests. The Association also fought the further move, inspired by Lancashire, which resulted in 1896 in freeing imported yarn from duty and in reducing the import duty on imported cotton piece goods to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Though Indian millowners were relieved by the simultaneous removal of the 5 per cent excise on yarn, the substitution therefore of a $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent countervailing excise on Indian mill-woven cloth did little to remove their annoyance.[2]

The turn of the century was a comparatively difficult period for Bombay's cotton manufacturers, whose markets for yarn in the Far East were being sharply reduced by the emergence of local cotton industries there, in Japan particularly, so that a shift had to be made from spinning to weaving. Political disturbances in China at the time further injured business with that large consumer market. Moreover the introduction of electric lighting, which made possible a lengthening of working hours and double-shift working, provoked serious disorders in the labour market and much hostile criticism in the Indian Press.[3] Lancashire cotton interests (along with Dundee jute interests), as could be expected, were concerned with the longer hours that the Indian mills were working, and agitation by them was largely responsible for the appointment of a Textile Factories Labour Committee in December 1906 on the Secretary of State's recommendation. The findings and recommendations of that

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1. Anstey 410, Saklatvala 15-17. The BMA's direct address to the Viceroy was, however, unsuccessful and the mints were reopened again to silver coinage only in 1900.

2. Mehta 66-71, Anstey 345-6. For government and parliamentary papers relating to the Indian Tariff Amendment Act No. XVI of 1894, to its successor Act No. III of 1896 and to the Cotton Duties Acts of 1894 and 1896, see India Leg. Progs. Jan. 1895, A, Nos. 1-64, ibid. Feb. 1896, A, Nos. 1-43 and P.P. 1895, LXXII, [C.-7602] and Return 202, and P.P. 1896, LX, [C.-8078] and Return 229.

3. Anstey 262, Pillai 130, M.D. Morris 103-5. See articles 'Bombay's Slaves' and 'Mill Labour in Bombay' in Times of India mail edition 16.9.1905, ibid. 23, 30.9.1905 giving supporting criticism of the native papers, and Indian Textile Journal 15.9.1905, 'Long Hours in the Bombay Mills'.

small Committee[1] led, in turn, to the setting up of a more comprehensive enquiry commission, the Indian Factory Labour Commission, which toured India from November 1907 to April 1908 investigating current factory conditions. The investigations showed not only that existing factory legislation was not being strictly enforced, but that stiffer legislation was desirable and that the factory inspection force should be strengthened both in numbers and professionally. The Commission, sure of its ground embodied its proposals in the shape of a draft Bill.[2] Consideration of the Reports of the Committee and the Commission allied to the failure of the BMA to secure self-regulation, induced Government to impose a further, much more effective, Factory Act in 1911, limiting working hours to twelve a day, even for males, and stiffening other regulations.[3] The new legislation was one more burden for the Bombay cotton industry to bear at a time when it was already suffering from the development of new cotton industries in India which encroached upon its market.[4]

The most powerful of these internal competitors was Gujarat, where at Ahmedabad there were some fifty mills in production by 1914 - two thirds of the number in Bombay City - and where from 1891 an (entirely?) Indian Millowners' Association had been established. The Indian grip on Ahmedabad's cotton industry was reflected also in the rest of the Bombay Presidency where there were some thirty cotton mills at this time. In Madras, by contrast, development had been slower. The four cotton mills in the capital, three in Coimbatore, one in Bellary and sixteen further in the Presidency and its Native States lagged in number well behind progress in the West. A Madras and Southern Indian Millowners' Association was, however, formed in 1910.[5]

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1. The three-man Committee of Sir Hamilton Freer-Smith, President, (late Superintending Inspector for Dangerous Trades in England), and two doctors, which was at work from December 1906 to March 1907, was instructed to make a preliminary enquiry only. For its Report see P.P. 1907, LIX, [Cd. - 3617].

2. The Commission was presided over by W.T. Morison, a Bombay Government official. Of the seven other members, the two British non-official representatives were Alexander McRobert and John Nicoll, on behalf of the Upper India and Bengal Chambers of Commerce respectively, whilst the Bombay Chamber and the BMA were jointly represented by Vithaldas Damodher Thackersey. For the Commission's Report see P.P. 1908, LXXIV, [Cd. 4292].

3. Anstey 298-301, M.D. Morris 105-6. For some further review of the Factory Acts of 1881, 1891 and 1911 see StMMPr 1882-83, Part I, 210; 1891-92, 313; and 1909-10, 59. J.C. Kydd, A History of Factory Legislation in India, provides a comprehensive study of the whole subject down to 1920.

4. See N.S. Sastri, 'Localisation of Cotton Textile Industry in India', Journal of the Madras University, July 1938, X, No.2, for a review of the question.

5. Though some co-operation amongst themselves presumably existed, the primary duty of the varying Mill-owners' Associations was to protect the local interests of their members. In the case of the Cotton Duties Bill in 1896 the Ahmedabad Association thus disapproved of the BMA's recommendations on the issue. See P.P. 1896, LX, 431.

But in this province too it was Indian mills which outnumbered the European ones. Out of the remainder of the two hundred and sixty four cotton mills in all-India, in Bengal, the Punjab, the United Provinces and elsewhere, some few, as in Bombay and Madras, were European owned - for example, the Bengal Mills in Calcutta.[1] Of these the small knot of large and efficient mills which had appeared in Cawnpore - the Elgin, Muir, Cawnpore and Victoria Mills, founded in 1862, 1874, 1882 and 1885 respectively - were outstanding. The European-owned mills, backed by the London registered West Patent Press Company - chief among the ancillary cotton gin and pressing concerns serving them, were among the largest in India, producing yarn and cloth for the North Indian market and playing a vital part in the economic growth of the city.[2] Under such multiple - overwhelmingly Indian - competition the profits of the Bombay cotton mills industry suffered a hard blow.[3]

If then the European role played in the country's cotton industry was that of a junior partner to the Indian, its impact was nevertheless felt in a number of directions: not only in the organisation and ownership of the industry but also on the production, commercial and general management sides of the mills. Where in Bombay Europeans had been only initially prominent in the BMA's affairs, the size of the Binny mills in Madras were a guarantee of a major voice in the Millowners' Association belatedly formed in that city. Apart from the Association in Ahmedabad, in which European participation in any case was absent, no other cotton millowner associations appear to have been in existence in India at this time,[4] but in the cases where no such association existed in their own areas, European millowners or their representatives looked to the local Chamber of Commerce to guard their interests. What was thus true for the Cawnpore and Agra mills who looked to the Upper India Chamber, was also the case in Bengal where five European mills were in existence in 1914, out of the fifteen in that Province.[5] (Indeed, when contrasted

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1. Thacker's 1914, commercial industries section, 8-25, Statistical Abstract ... British India from 1904-05 to 1913-14., 263, Pillai 130, M.R. Dhekney, Chambers of Commerce and Business Associations in India, 12, Madras C/Comm Report 1910, ix.

2. H.R. Nevill, Cawnpore: A Gazetteer, 79-81. For some account of the four Cawnpore mills in question see /Upper India Chamber of Commerce/, Upper India Chamber of Commerce Cawnpore 1888-1938, ch. 'The rise of industrial Cawnpore'. This work notes differing starting dates from those of Nevill regarding the three mills Elgin (1861), Cawnpore (1883) and Victoria (1886).

3. See Pillai, 144.

4. A Cotton Mill-owners' Association formed in Cawnpore in May 1891 folded after a few months of existence. See Upper India C/Comm Report 1891, 29.

5. See Thacker's 1914, commercial industries section, 8-9. 'There is no Cotton Mill Association like the Bombay Mill-owners' Association on this side of India', Bengal C/Comm Report 1905, II, 609.

with the not too dissimilar development position of the industry in Madras, the apparent absence of any cotton millowners' association in Bengal appears quite surprising.) But such loose links of the European cotton industry with the Chamber of Commerce in Bengal - a sharp contrast with the tea industry - meant that cotton representation in its leadership was lacking. Even the stronger voice of cotton men in the Upper India and Bombay Chambers could not effectively replace the voice of the independent mill-owner association. Moreover even the strong tie between the Bombay Chamber and the BMA did not prevent them adopting different stances on issues affecting the industry. In the circumstances the overall European role in cotton pressure groups was very small.

On the production side of the industry European textile experts both in the European and Indian mills were much in evidence in such capacities as managers of spinning and weaving and carding departments. European engineers, as well as the artisans, were also employed.[1] Moreover the industry was another with which the European Managing Agents were connected, those like Greaves, Cotton & Co. in Bombay, Binny's in Madras and Kettlewell, Bullen & Co. and Shaw, Wallace & Co. in Calcutta becoming involved at the company flotation stage.[2] Much has been made of the fact that the Managing Agents in question - often taking a commission based on production or turnover - profited handsomely from their arrangements with the mill companies in times when the companies themselves were doing poorly,[3] but such a state of affairs did not represent any abnormal business practice.[4] What can, however, be said in comment is that in associating with the cotton mill industry in Bombay and elsewhere in India, the European Managing Agents had again shown both their enterprise and the fact that they had lost none of their business shrewdness.[5]

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1. There is little evidence to show that such men played any pressure group role, though as individuals some may have been active in municipal politics or in the EAIDA. A number, of course, appeared as technical witnesses before various government enquiry commissions.

2. DeSouza 86-90, 103, Mehta 50, Thacker's 1914, Bombay section, 102.

3. See Dowding xvii, M.D. Morris 34-6 and A.S. Pearse, The Cotton Industry of India, 59.

4. This practice bears comparison with the contrast between the positions of the preference and ordinary shareholders in a company, in which the holders of ordinary shares, who may earn a larger amount, or none at all, have to wait for the preference shareholders to receive their fixed dividends first. Moreover, founder's shares, allocated to promoters of a company, have for long provided a potential chance for rich-but not thereby unethical - pickings.

5. The shrewdness manifested was not the sole prerogative of the Europeans. Indeed as Pearse, 58, notes, Bombay was the one centre in India where the Managing Agencies were not mainly European. See also DeSouza, 103.

In eastern India the major textile industry was jute. This had long been used by Indian weavers for small-scale, primitive handicraft production,[1] and from the 1830's exported jute had been mill manufactured at Dundee. The first steam-powered Indian mill was not established until 1855, when George Ackland set up his mill at Rishra, near Serampore, in the heart of a jute growing area, using machinery imported from Dundee.[2] The opening of the Calcutta railway link with the Raniganj coalfields, and the stimulus to the use of jute provided by the Crimean War, which curtailed Russian hemp exports, served to consolidate Ackland's initiative and to make the Hooghly a world centre for jute spinning and weaving. By 1869 five European-run jute mills were in existence and by 1876 sixteen, encouraged by high, regular profits such as those yielded by the privately owned Hastings Mill, which made the fortune of the Birkmyre brothers - Scots like the great majority of the Indian jute industry's directors, managers and engineers. The exports of jute yarn and cloth which had averaged less than half a million hundredweight in the five years before 1852-53 had jumped to one million in the quinquennium ending in 1862-63, to nearly five million in that to 1872-73 and to well over seven million in the later quinquennium to 1882-83.[3] By the beginning of the 1880's twenty three jute mills had been established in India (twenty one of them in Bengal), with some 5,000 looms, 68,000 spindles and a work force of 26,000.[4]

In striking contrast to the cotton industry, Indians - though involved in jute baling - took virtually no part in jute manufacture itself. (Perhaps, as has been suggested,[5] because there was no Indian or Asian market for jute so that familiarity with Western, particularly European, markets was of prime importance). Management was solidly European, - even at the middle management level where European artisans served, as in the cotton mills, as heads of the weaving, spinning and carding departments; so too was ownership in rupee as well as sterling companies,[6] and this was true also of the purchasing and

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1. See Watt, II, 545-7.

2. P. Lovett, The Mirror of Investment 1927, 243, A.K. Bagchi, Private Investment in India 1900-1939, 262, G.W.Tyson, The Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry, 1853-1953, 65-6.

3. A.G. Roussac, The New Calcutta Directory ... for 1859., part X, 205; Heywood and Company, Limited, 83; The Cyclopedia of India, II, 275, 277.

4. StMMPr, 1879-80, 65.

5. Bagchi, 263.

6. Ibid.

handling agencies at the great centres of the jute trade, Sirajganj, Narainganj and Calcutta.[1] The result was that when in the late 1870's too rapid an extension of mill capacity led to overproduction, which brought depression to the industry and even forced several mills into liquidation, the industry's leadership was able to draw a common conclusion in favour of collective organisation. (Such an organisation would also facilitate the fixing of agreed selling prices for the general benefit of the industry.) From informal meetings it was a short step to the formation, on 10 November 1884, of the Indian Jute Manufactures Association[2] under the chairmanship of the redoubtable Scot, J.J.J. Keswick.[3] A small committee assisted the Chairman, whilst the Secretary of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, to which the IJMA was affiliated, acted ex-officio as Secretary for the Association too.[4]

The new Association's membership was entirely composed of Managing Agents acting on behalf of named jute mills - all seemingly performing management services for them, even though some firms, such as Andrew Yule (in 1899) or James Finlay & Co. Ltd. (in 1913) were described in the membership lists simply as Agents, or in the case of the Birkmyre Brothers as Proprietors, of the mill or mills they represented.[5] Membership subscription was based on loomage, and fixed, in 1889, at one rupee per loom - which served to meet among other things, the monthly service payment to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce of two hundred and fifty rupees.[6] In the 1880's general meetings of

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1. See, for example, G. Harrison, Bird and Company of Calcutta, 32, and C.C. McLeod, 'The Indian Jute Industry', in Journal of the Royal Society of Arts. 24 December 1915, LXIV, No. 3292. The latter provides a contemporary overall view of the Bengal jute world covering its planting, baling, native handicraft, manufacturing and trading sectors.

2. This association, renamed the Indian Jute Mills' Association in July 1902 - its awkward first title's appearance as ... Manufacturers(') Association is incorrect - is styled henceforth IJMA. Till 1890 its reports were biannual.

3. The Cycolpedia of India, II, 277-8, Lovett 243, D.R. Wallace, The Romance of Jute., 40-1. Wallace's book provides a short history of the Calcutta jute mill industry for the period 1855 to 1909.

4. IJMA Report 1888^{II}, 6; 1889^{I}, 1; 1892, 1.

5. Yule's thus in 1892 was already looking after two jute mills, whilst the Finlay Company of Glasgow which was incorporated in 1909, and took over Calcutta branch interests previously carried on under the style of Finlay, Muir & Co., had a special Jute Department in its Calcutta branch handling the affairs of the Champdany and Wellington Mills which it owned. See [Andrew Yule & Co., Ltd.], Andrew Yule & Company ... Ltd, 9, [James Finlay & Co., Limited], James Finlay & Company Limited, vii, 46-7, 90-3.

6. IJMA Report 1888^{II}, 3; 1889^{I}, 1-2.

members were held half yearly, but from 1891 the practice of holding an annual general meeting was adopted. Special meetings of members however were held much more frequently when such issues as short time working needed to be settled. In particular when minimum selling rates of the mills' output were to be mutually agreed upon, members met as frequently as weekly.[1] Such meetings, and those of the meetings of the Committee, were facilitated both by the small size and homogeneity of the Association's membership and by its entire location in one city, Calcutta. The number of mills represented in the IJMA grew from eighteen in 1889 to twenty three in 1899 and to forty four in 1913, but so many members represented more than one mill that membership, seventeen in 1899, increased only marginally to twenty in 1913.[2] Moreover, when other jute associations were established in Calcutta from the early 1880's to cater for the processing, trading and export sides of the jute business, the placing of these associations, like the IJMA, under the aegis of the Bengal Chamber made working together easy. Relationships were further eased by personal overlaps in membership, as for example Robert Williamson of Finlay, Muir & Co., who was Chairman both of the IJMA and the Calcutta Hydraulic Press and Jute Balers' Associations.

As the Indian jute industry grew in world-wide importance, so did the stature of the IJMA, its representative body, grow. This Government recognised particularly with the grant to the Association of the right to representation in the new Provincial Legislative Council set up under the Indian Councils Act of 1909.[3] The industry's contribution to exports, and its understandable interest in port facilities, was also acknowledged by representation on the Calcutta Port Trust Commissioners.[4] Indeed, the IJMA quickly established itself as an energetic and influential body, taking up, as its annual reports show a variety of issues of common concern, some minor such as the unfair competition from the convict labour of the Alipore Jail, others of greater significance such as the expansion of sales by the holding of exhibitions abroad, on which it co-operated with the Baled Jute Association in Calcutta.[5]

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1. IJMA Report 1886[I], 12-15.
2. Ibid. 1889[I], 5; 1899, 19-21; 1913, 32-3.
3. See chapter V. below.
4. Bagchi, 266.
5. This Association had been formed in 1892 to replace the Jute Balers' Association which had collapsed. See Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 70.

It interested itself in the regular work of the Bengal Boiler Commission[1] and additionally took up such issues as the freight rates for jute, the assessment of Income Tax on mill profits, the suppression of native 'grog-shops' in the neighbourhood of the mills, and occasional cases of poaching of labour between members of the Association.[2] The IJMA was also quick to give its views to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce when Government asked that body in 1890 for its comments on the Bill under review to amend the first Indian Factories Act. In particular it objected - unsuccessfully in the outcome - to the section in the Bill prohibiting the employment of children aged under nine. A year later the Association sounded out the Bombay Mill-owners' Association to ascertain the action that body was taking on renewed agitation in Britain on Indian factory legislation, but this apart, itself decided to proceed no further on the point.[3]

The competing commercial and industrial lobby in Britain was very active and used the opportunity provided by the Royal Commission on Labour at work in 1892, to give evidence concerning Indian competition with Manchester and Dundee in the textile trades. To assist its own work the Royal Commission requested the Secretary of State to initiate an enquiry into the conditions of labour in India. In consequence the Indian Government sought information from the IJMA and other bodies such as the BMA on conditions in their industries. Though no imminent danger was apparent so soon after the passing of a new Factories Act, nevertheless IJMA took care to stress that conditions of labour in the jute industry were very good. The Dundee jute industry was not satisfied however and J.H. Walker, who gave evidence to the Royal Commission on behalf of the Dundee Chamber of Commerce, which represented ninety per cent of the jute industry in Britain, was particularly alarmed at the prospect of legislation in Britain shortening the British working day, arguing that this would bring about the ruin of the local industry and would 'send the Dundee

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1. Boiler legislation in the Province was governed by Bengal Act III of 1879 which provided for the periodical inspection of steam-boilers and their attachments. Such inspections were carried out under the control of a Boiler Commission on which non-officials such as John Taylor of the Managing Agents Burn & Co., were represented. See Report of the Boiler Commission, Bengal for 1907-8; and of the Boiler Laws Committee of 1920-21 for a comprehensive discussion of the subject.

2. IJMA Report 1886^{I}, 4; 1888^{II}, 1, 3; 1889^{I}, 6-7; 1889^{II}, 2; 1892, 6; 1909, 89.

3. Ibid. 1890^{I}, 2-3; 1891, 2-3, Bengal C/Comm Report 1890-91, 601-4.

manufacturers with all their stock and plant "to the banks of the Indus".[1] So concerned was Dundee at the competition from Bengal, that it sent its senior Member of Parliament, Sir John Leng, to make enquiries on the spot into the Indian jute industry in 1894-5. To Dundee's consternation, however, Leng issued a favourable report, stressing the good record of the Bengal industry in caring for its workers' welfare.[2]

But though the growing Bengal jute industry was sensitive to any moves towards tighter factory legislation in India, it never found the supply of labour a major problem.[3] Indeed the belated request of the IJMA that the Labour Enquiry Commission, which had been appointed in November 1895 to enquire into the labour supply for the Bengal coal mines and for the north eastern India tea gardens, should also include the jute industry within the scope of its enquiries, reflected concern for the future rather than any present worry over labour shortages. As the Finlay, Muir representative told that Commission, his firm had 'no trouble about labour' for the jute mills it represented. Only 36 per cent of the labour supply, however, came from Bengal, and the balance principally from selected areas in Behar and the NWP, with 43 and 17 per cent respectively. With further expansion of the industry in the near future a virtual certainty, the IJMA Chairman G.N. Nairn of Thomas Duff & Co.Ltd. - in giving evidence - therefore solicited government help in tapping new sources of labour, and a willing Commission responded by recommending that District Officers in Behar and the NWP, especially in those areas from which mill-hands did not then emigrate, should be asked to publish prospectuses giving particulars of wages and working conditions in the jute mills.[4] A decade later, the enquiry in 1905 into the supply of labour to industries in Bengal and the United Provinces, made at the behest of a conference that year of the Indian and Ceylon Chambers of Commerce revealed that

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1. P.P. 1892, XXXIV, 239-40, /C.-6708-III./, ibid. 1892, XXXVI.V, 168, 201-2, /C.-6795-XI./, IJMA Report 1892, 2, 3, Appendix A, and Bengal C/Comm Report 1892-93, I, 37-8, II 48-57.

2. Capital, supplement, 3.11.1938, article 'Jute -- from John Company's Days' by Capital's jute correspondent, Bagchi 262. The Bengal jute industry was to continue with its good welfare record. In 1906 thus, Government in noting the 'excellent and well sanitated cooly-lines for the operatives' in the larger factories in Bengal singled out for special mention the lines of the Gourepore and Alliance mills which were under the respective management of Barry & Co. and Begg, Dunlop. See India Commerce & Industry Progs. Nov. 1906, A Fact., No. 7.

3. Not only did the pulling power of the dominant urban centre of Calcutta and its ready communication with the main recruitment centres facilitate such supply, but, as Bagchi 135 notes, work conditions and wages in the jute mills were better than those in mines and plantations.

4. LEC Report, 1, 49, 50, appendix liii and lxi.

labour supply still continued to present no problem apart from a seasonal shortage during the hot summer months.[1]

If the jute industry felt comfortable enough about labour supplies it was made very uneasy by the renewal of Government interest in factory legislation, initiated in 1906-07 with the Freer-Smith Committee and followed up by the appointment of a wider-ranging Labour Commission under W.T. Morrison in 1907-08. IJMA made sure that the latter Commission was under no misapprehension about the jute industry's overwhelming opposition to any further factory legislation, it being absurd, it declared, to attempt to apply similar standards to both Indian and British factories.[2] And when the Commission's findings, coupled with other evidence accumulated by Government,[3] prompted new factory legislation introduced in July 1909,[4] the specially appointed jute industry representative in the India Legislative Council, Archy Birkmyre, fought hard to save what he could. Government acknowledged the 'sound practical advice' that Birkmyre gave in the Select Committee on the Bill, and when Birkmyre at a very late stage proposed various amendments as part of a 'package deal', Government went out of its way to circulate Local Governments for their opinions. The most important of these proposed amendments were those deleting reference to maximum permitted hours of adult labour in textile factories and proposing an increase in the maximum child labour hours from six to six and a half (an arrangement better suited to the shift system operated in the jute mills). On its side, should the requested amendments be granted, the industry would have been prepared to accept a slightly reduced factory working day than that sought in the Bill. Though Government opinion on the whole was unfavourable to Birkmyre's vigorously presented 'package', which he withdrew, he at least had the satisfaction of knowing that the Punjab and Burma would have been prepared to accept the amendments, whilst the Bengal Government, the most concerned, would have agreed to the increase in working hours for children.[5]

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1. IJMA Report 1905, 16; 1906, iii, Bagchi 135.

2. IJMA Report 1908, 4, 5, iii.

3. The Times of India articles against the excessive working hours in the Bombay mills in 1905 were notably cited.

4. A Bill dealing with the health and safety of operatives in factories which had been introduced into Council in September 1905, (see Leg.Cl. progs. 29.9.1905 XLIV, 218-9), and allowed to lie over in the meanwhile, was withdrawn on the new Bill's introduction.

5. Leg.Cl. progs. 30.7.1909, XLVIII, 1-3; ibid. 3.1.1911, 31.1.1911, 1.3.1911, 21.3.1911, XLIX, 71-605, IJMA Report 1910, 1, ii. The industry's fear at allowing maximum daily working hours for adults to be fixed at twelve, was in its creation of a precedent. Government could thus, it was felt, later reduce such hours further, if desired, by a simple amendment of the new legislation.

The marginally increased cost of production as a result of the 1911 Factories Act - a factor which may have contributed to the failure of a significantly higher number of jute companies than usual to pay any dividend to their Ordinary shareholders for that year[1] - was a small worry, however, when related to the far more vital issue which had been concerning the industry regularly for many years past, namely that of overproduction. As the size of the industry rose from twenty six mills in 1889-90, to thirty four in 1899-1900 and to thirty nine in 1906 (of which thirty seven were in Bengal and one each in Cawnpore and Madras), and the number of installed looms and spindles rose proportionately until some 145,000 persons were employed in the industry, even the overall long-term upward trend of demand could not dispel the nightmare on the issue. The extent of the worry was reflected in the statistics: production of gunny bags, 76,000,000 in 1879-80, had jumped to 320,000,000 in 1906-7, whilst cloth production had spurted forward at an even greater rate in the same period, from 7,000,000 to 710,000,000 yards, a one hundred-fold increase.[2] What was significant, however, and in very sharp contrast to the situation in the Bombay cotton industry - but perhaps attributable to the British and particularly Scottish homogeneity of its membership - was the success of the Association in enforcing, or securing agreement to, a variety of measures to limit production and so sustain prices and regulate profits. Gentlemanly agreements to go on short-time working which were first introduced in February 1886 for a half year period were extended to 1887 and then continued without a break to 1891;[3] in 1889 thus it was agreed to work 'for nine days a fortnight for such period as the Association may determine', and in 1896 a similar curtailment of production was considered to 'be beneficial to the trade' though opinion differed as to how to effect it. When the high

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1. See Capital 12.12.1912. The Howrah and Gourepore mills for example, operating 1,550 and 1,255 looms and having paid-up Ordinary Capitals of 1,750,000 and 1,200,000 rupees, failed to pay a dividend for the first time since (at least) 1902. The general temporariness of the dividend restrictions, however, was illustrated by the case of the Budge-Budge mill managed by Andrew Yule. Though this paid the very low Ordinary dividend of 4 per cent for the year to October 1911, as compared with dividends of 18, 20 and 25 per cent during the five previous years, its dividend for 1911-12 was back to normal proportions again at 18 per cent.

2. The Cyclopedia of India, II, 278, StMMPr 1905-06, 177. As Anstey, 280, notes, gunny bags were used for packing such as rice, wheat and oilseeds, and as sandbags during war periods, whilst gunny cloth (or Hessians) was used for baling cotton, wool and other fibres.

3. Wallace 43, IJMA Report 1886[I] 1. Strikingly the agreements extended to a voluntary halt to investment in new capacity, see Bagchi, 270.

prices and sudden expansion of demand of the boom years 1906 and 1907[1] were followed by a recession in 1910 which caused the Association's Committee to see some renewed arrangement as 'the most important question' before them, they were again able to secure agreement of the members 'for a resumption of short time working in consequence of the unsatisfactory condition of the trade'.[2]

The success of the IJMA in regulating output was due in part to the fact that no major jute-manufacturing concerns were not members, and that the industry was not divided commercially, management being virtually all European.[3] But not a little was also due to the interlocking of interests which was a feature of the Managing Agency system as it operated in Bengal. This meant that a comparatively small number of Managing Agents, operating in close proximity and constant contact, could dominate decision making.[4] Thus the chairmanship of IJMA was held after Keswick by a succession of men from major Managing Agencies, namely James Henderson of George Henderson & Co. (Agents for the Barnagore factory) who became Chairman in 1886, Robert Williamson a senior assistant in Finlay, Muir, the Champdany and Wellington Mills Agents, who held the post for three years at the end of the 'eighties, and in the next two decades by men such as George Lyell a partner in Macneill & Co. which held the Ganges Mill Agency, John Nicoll of the Thomas Duff firm (Managing Agents for the Samnuggur, Titaghur and Victoria Mills) and notably by (Sir) Archy Birkmyre of Birkmyre Brothers which firm both owned and managed the Hastings Mill along with its other Managing Agency interests.[5] The jute industry representatives in the Legislative Councils of the Government of India and the Government of Bengal were also from the Managing Agencies, as were 'the jute men' in the Calcutta Port Trust or the directorate of the Bank of Bengal. The success of IJMA in regulating freight rates on railways, and in securing agreed terms with inland steamer companies - as it did with only a very occasional hiatus as in 1905 - may also be seen to flow not only from

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1. By 1908 India's output was to outstrip that of Dundee. See Anstey, 280.

2. IJMA Report 1889[I], 8; 1896, 9; 1906, i; 1907, ii; 1910, 2, iii-iv, and Wallace 43.

3. In 1899 thus, the twenty three jute mills which were represented in the IJMA by an all-European membership operated some 12,600 looms. Against this the eleven non-Association jute mills then in India operated the small remainder of 1,500. As to homogenity of management, even in 1911 there was only one Indian director on the board of a jute mill, and that on the smallest mill of all. See IJMA Report 1899, 19-21, The Cyclopedia of India II, 278, and Bagchi 262-3.

4. The seventeen European Managing Agents (with Birkmyres) who represented the twenty three largest jute mills which were in the IJMA in 1899 controlled some ninety per cent of the industry.

5. IJMA Reports 1886[I] - 1906.

IJMA's organisational strength and its links with other parts of the jute industry,[1] but from the fact that the Managing Agencies which managed so many of the jute mills, were either themselves also managing steamship companies and certain of the railway companies which tapped jute-growing areas, or had close connections and ties with the Managing Agencies which did so, and that they worked with them on the lines of mutual co-operation. The same held good for the relations of the jute manufacturing industry with the Indian coal mines which provided the motive power: often the Managing Agency which ran the mills also managed coal mines from which these mills drew their supplies.[2] In 1914 IJMA's membership covered forty four jute mills and factories, operating 37,600 looms, only 800 looms short of the total for the industry in India, and this at a time when as the Chairman noted, IJMA mills were 'consuming more jute than all the rest of the world put together'.[3] In 1914 apart from the Hastings Mill owned by the Birkmyres, and one other mill (the small concern of the Angus Jute Company, represented by the Company Secretary), all the mills continued to be represented on the Association by their Managing Agents. Not only that, just five Managing Agencies - Bird & Co., Thomas Duff & Co., Andrew Yule, Jardine, Skinner, and Duncan Brothers - between them controlled almost one half of all the weaving capacity in the industry.[4]

The development of the jute industry on the Hooghly, of the railways, and of river steamer services on the Ganges and Brahmaputra all turned upon the discovery and exploitation of coal deposits in eastern India. The first coal was mined by two servants of the East India Company, Sustonius Grant Heatley and John Sumner, as early as 1774; more successful prospecting was carried out by William Jones, a mechanic, at Raniganj in the Burdwan Division of Bengal in 1814-15, and following Jones's death, his mine was taken over by the Agency House of Alexander & Co., who operated it successfully from 1824 to 1831.[5]

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1. Apart from the Calcutta Baled Jute Association which - unlike the Hydraulic Press Association - was still extant, further separate associations of baled jute shippers and brokers and of jute fabric shippers and brokers had come into existence by the early twentieth century to cater for the various commercial needs of the industry, all functioning under the aegis of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, as noted. See Thacker's 1913, Calcutta section, 51.
2. Andrew Yule ... 9-11, Harrison 30-34, Bagchi, 264-9.
3. IJMA Report 1913, viii, 32-35, StMMPr 1914-15, 27.
4. IJMA Report 1913, 32-5.
5. W.M. Paris et al., History of the Bengal Coal Co. Ltd., 3-12.

With the crash of Alexander's in 1832 official assignees took over and ran the mine, and it was from them that the enterprising firm of Carr-Tagore acquired it in turn in 1835, successfully competing with other coal mining pioneers who were at work by the 1830's.[1] In 1843 Carr-Tagore merged into the Bengal Coal Company, largely European in direction,[2] which became the largest coal firm in the Raniganj coalfield and indeed in India.[3] Though in the 1840's and 1850's another large Indian firm, that of Gobin Pundit appeared in Raniganj, followed (among non-British entrepreneurs) by the Armenian firm of Apcar and Company, by the Laik-Banerjee concern in the mid 1880's in the Barakar coalfield and at the turn of the century by N.C. Sirkar,[4] the lead of the Bengal Coal Company was never overtaken, as was acknowledged by the election of its superintendant, C.W. Gray, as first Chairman of the Indian Mining Association in May 1892,[5] a post he held, with a one year break, until 1899.[6]

Well before that date, however, other major European companies had become active in the coal industry in India: the Equitable and the New Beerbhoom Coal Companies at Raniganj, the Burrakur and the East Indian Coal Company in the Jherria field, and the East Indian Railway, which not only produced coal for its own use, but had been putting its surplus raisings on the market and arousing much heated correspondence about the practice between the private coal companies and the Railway and Government authorities, even to the Secretary of State in the depression year 1881.[7] By 1879-80 the six leading

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1. Paris, 12-13, C.P. Simmons, 'Indigenous Enterprise in the Indian Coal Mining Industry', Indian Economic and Social History Review April-June 1976, XIII, No.2, 189.

2. Paris, 17, Simmons 190.

3. 'The Bengal Coal Company, as you have probably heard repeated, almost usque ad nauseam, is the premier Coal Company in India'. See Chairman's speech 30.9.1908 given in /Bengal Coal Company, Ltd./, The Bengal Coal Company Ltd. Chairmen's Speeches at Shareholders' Meetings 1908-1942, 3. As Paris, 1, notes: 'premier in the sense of oldest and largest'. Andrew Yule & Co. regarded it as a great achievement when they managed to acquire the Company's Managing Agency in 1908. See Andrew Yule & Company ... Ltd, 11.

4. Simmons, 190-3.

5. This Association is referred to herein in short as the IMA.

6. IMA Report 1892-3, 1; 1901-2, 1-2. Gray, who had been mainly instrumental in founding the IMA, had vacated the chairmanship whilst abroad in England in 1896-7

7. Paris, 48; Capital, supplement, 3.11.1938, article by R.B. Whitehead 'Early Days of Coal in Bengal', 59; C.P.Simmons, 'Towards a Primary Source Bibliography for the Study of the Indian Coal Mining Industry c.1843-c.1947', Bengal Past and Present 1972, XCI, Part II: No.172, 151 note 30. In 1879 the East Indian Railway had become state-owned, but it was not until 1891 that its colliery stopped selling coal in the open market.

coal companies in Raniganj had a collective output of 470,000 tons, whilst three mines in the Hazaribagh District of the Chota Nagpur Division contributed a further 363,000 tons to an all-India output that year of just over a million tons. The steady economic development of India and the growth of steamship services in Asian waters led to numerous new coal companies springing up to emulate the nine, so that by 1881 there were 68 coal mines in India, 66 of them in Bengal.[1] Since the Indian coal industry in the 'eighties proved as prosperous as anticipated, still more collieries opened, there being 105 of them by 1886, all but a handful in Bengal, while 1,400,000 tons of coal were raised, over a third more than in 1879-80.[2]

From the start of the 1890's the accelerated expansion of the Indian economy provided a constantly increasing local demand for coal. In addition to the supplies needed by the railways, inland steamers, and coastal and international shipping, industrial use was heavy. Jute and cotton mills, iron works, and brick and tea garden factories, were some of the customers to be satisfied. This local demand, when coupled with the major Indian coal export trade then being built up and the reduction of coal imports,[3] brought boom years to the coal industry.[4] But prosperity brought with it strain on the railways and shortage of wagons, an extra burden on the docks, where improved loading facilities and wharf accommodation were needed, and the labour supply problem already so familiar in other industries. (Here, even though the coal companies were able to exercise pressure on potential labour through their zamindary relationship with the population in the coalfields' area,[5]

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1. StMMPr 1879-80, 61; 1881-82, 101; 1891-92, 308.

2. Ibid., 1886-87, 107; 1891-92, 308; Paris, 76.

3. In 1891-92 Bombay's foreign imports of coal were 550,000 tons, all from the United Kingdom. By 1900-01 the Presidency was importing a mere 82,000 tons of coal. See Bombay Admin. Report 1895-96, 113 and ibid. 1900-01, 137. Calcutta's coal imports had dwindled to 12,600 tons by 1893, as the Bengal Admin. Report 1892-93, 394, shows. The coal companies were indeed fortunate that the boom in the Indian industrial and railway demand for coal from the early 1890's came at a time when much enhanced shipping freight costs had made Welsh coal no longer a competitive import. See Simmons, 'Towards a Primary Source Bibliography ...', 155 note 73.

4. Paris, 76, 85. Between 1891 and 1900 Indian coal output jumped from 2.3 to 6.1 million tons, while coal exports in the latter year were half a million tons. See IMA Report 1914, 76-7.

5. As StMMPr 1909-10, 55, pointed out, in some areas, including nearly all the coal-bearing land in Bengal, mineral rights had been conceded permanently with the surface ownership. The Bengal Coal Company, one of the outstanding zamindars, controlled 80,000 acres by the end of the century. See Simmons, 'Towards a Primary Source Bibliography ...', 136.

only a few castes would work underground and even then 'they did so with considerable reluctance', while if the rice crop was good, the labour supply to the coalfields suffered.)[1] Common difficulties pointed the way to common action and when in 1891 it became known that the Government was contemplating a Mines Act[2] the Bengal Chamber of Commerce formed a Mining Sub-Committee to safeguard that industry's interests. The Chamber's initiative found favour with the mining interests, and led to the setting up of a Provisional Committee in the spring of 1892 'to consider the advisability of calling into existence a Mining Association working in connection with the Chamber of Commerce'. It was from this committee's deliberations that the Indian Mining Association emerged on 16 May 1892.[3]

The objects of the IMA were wide ranging. The Association thus was not only to protect and foster the interests of those engaged in the mining industries of India and to provide arbitration services for the settlement of disputes between mining proprietors, but was also 'to take part in such discussions affecting land as may have a bearing upon mines', authority being given to the IMA to enter into communication with Government or other public bodies where necessary.[4] In practice, however, the Association's sphere of activities was a narrower one than that allowed for in its objects, as its membership was confined geographically to Bengal, and to those interested in coal mining alone. Moreover, though by the 1890's there were many (mainly small) Indian-owned coal mines in existence, only a few such mines were represented in the IMA, the major portion of the membership being European, with the Managing Agency element dominating here as in other European commercial associations whose market outlet was Calcutta. Thus in 1895 of the eighteen members of the IMA, European Managing Agents represented eleven. Of the remaining seven, three were European (including the Bengal Coal Company

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1. Paris, 64-5. As Simmons ibid. 137 indicates, there were constant references in the files of the Bengal Coal Company - as in the Labour file for 1917 - to the problem of securing an adequate, settled, non-seasonal labour force.

2. The Indian Government had been asked in 1890 by the Secretary of State - who had been influenced by the proceedings of the International Labour Conference held in Berlin that year - to consider legislation for the inspection of mines and the regulation of the employment therein of women, young persons, and children. See Govt. of India (Geology and Minerals) Resolution No. 10/7-10, 9 October 1896, given in Government of India. Department of Revenue and Agriculture, Papers regarding Legislation for the Regulation and Sanitation of Mines in India.

3. IMA Report 1892-3, 1, Bengal C/Comm Report 1891-92, I, 133.

4. IMA Report 1898-9, 93, Whitehead, 61.

represented by its superintendent), two Armenian and two Indian.[1] There were other coal mines in Bengal and in Assam, Madras, the Punjab, the Central Provinces, Burma, Hyderabad and Baluchistan[2] but the collieries represented in the IMA produced the great bulk of the coal of India. In the year 1912 for example, immediately prior to the formation of a separate native controlled Indian Mining Federation, IMA's six leading European coal companies alone produced 2.6 million tons of coal - little short of twenty per cent of the coal output of India for that year,[3] whilst its total membership, expanded to over fifty by the addition of many small new concerns, accounted for around two thirds of the all-India output. Major control of the industry, though, still remained with a tight knot of fifteen European Managing Agencies plus the East Indian Railway Company, now an IMA member.[4] Bird and Company thus managed no less than eight coal concerns and the McLeod and Heilgers firms five each. Indeed a distinctive feature of the industry as it expanded was the way in which newly formed smaller companies which had purchased coal land for development from the larger and older established European companies remained linked to them not only through a common Managing Agency but through common directorships as well, as the case of the Burrakur concern and its offshoot companies typified.[5] The few IMA members, moreoever, not only dominated the industry in production, accounting for some seventy per cent of India's coal output even as late as the 1940's, but also tended to produce a higher proportion of better quality coal than their non-IMA counterparts.[6]

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1. IMA Report 1895-6,-. As with the ITA the Calcutta European Managing Agents rotated seats on the IMA Committee amongst themselves, sitting in the early years with the Bengal Coal Company's superintendent and at times with a railway company representative.

2. See Thacker's 1896, 1375-6. The Assam Tea Company even leased coal fields in the Naga Hills, see India Rev. & Agric. Progs. Minerals, Feb.1892, Nos.32-3.

3. See G.H. Le Maistre, The Investor's Year Book 1913, 244-305. The six companies were the Bengal, the Equitable, the East Indian, the Burrakur, the New Beerbhoom and the Raneegunge Coal Association producing some 900,000; 470,000; 410,000; 340,000; 300,000 and 200,000 tons respectively.

4. See IMA Report, 1912, i, ii, listing 51 coal companies represented at its annual meeting (to which must be added the Bengal Coal Company and its two subsidiary coal companies under the Managing Agency of Andrew Yule); and Indian Mining Federation, Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1913-1963, 42.

5. Le Maistre, 251, 261, 279, 309, and see Simmons, 'Towards a Primary Source Bibliography ...', 131.

6. Simmons, 'Towards a Primary Source Bibliography ...', 131.

The first report of the IMA demonstrates the issues preoccupying its original members. Concern over the adequacy of railway wagon capacity figured largely, as did such topics as railway charges, the sale of coke by the East Indian Railway and the storage and shipping facilities for coal being provided at the newly opened Kidderpore Docks in Calcutta. Railway issues were taken up as firmly as possible with the Railway management, whilst at Kidderpore outright satisfaction was quickly achieved, since coal exports not only set the Docks to work but occupied pride of place there in the future.[1] But it was Government legislation which attracted most attention; both the Bill, then before the Indian Legislative Council, to amend the 1870 Land Acquisition Act,[2] and the more important measure, the proposed Mines Act. Not satisfied with having the Indian Government pass a second Factory Act, there was a party in England, it seemed, which was anxious to have it meddle also in Indian mining affairs.[3] But legislation did not come quickly. Rather, following an Indian Government suggestion - made after taking the views of the Local Governments - James Grundy, who had been Assistant Inspector of Mines in the United Kingdom, was appointed as Her Majesty's Inspector of Mines in India. He arrived in Bengal at the end of 1893 to 'visit and report upon the principal mines in the country'. After first visiting sixty seven mines and making over one hundred underground inspections[4] Grundy met the IMA members at an Association Special General Meeting on 20 June 1894, where they put their views forward 'plainly and forcibly' on the contemplated legislation. Whilst not objecting in principle to better mine safety regulations, provided they were suited to India's wants, they strongly opposed other measures which sentiment in Britain seemed to wish to foist upon them, such as the banning of female labour in the mines. This was quite unwarranted, for as the Baraboni Coal Company's representative R.C. Banerjee, the sole Indian delegate present at the meeting, stressed, the women had to supplement their husbands' earnings which the men habitually spent at the grog-shop. With the labour supply position poor, the last thing desired was government restrictions. Having

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1. IMA Report 1892-3, 1-9, Whitehead 61, Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 94.

2. The IMA, concerned for the zamindary interests of its members, objected to the finality of the award decision accorded to the Collector, to the necessity of proceeding by regular suit in the Civil Courts if dissatisfied with his decision and (echoing the planters) to the method of determining 'market value'. See IMA Report 1892-3, 1, Bengal C/Comm Report 1892-93, I, 26-7, II, 136-9.

3. IMA Report 1892-3, 4.

4. J. Grundy, Report of the Inspection of Mines in India 1893-4, 2.

made the point well, it was a relief but no surprise to find Grundy's report on this both 'practical' and sensible'.[1]

Following Grundy's report, submitted in July 1894, Government set up a special Mining Committee in May 1895 to frame rules to specify the heads on which mining legislation was desirable. The Committee, presided over by a Bengal official, included Grundy, one native mine owners' representative, and Ernest Cable and William Miller representing the IMA and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce respectively.[2] In the summer of 1895 the IMA Committee generally approved of the lines of the draft Mines Act and associated sanitary and other Rules submitted to them by the Mining Committee. In November 1896 the Government Blue Book was published,[3] on which, at Government request, they offered some additional points in 1897.[4] The general approval, however, at once evaporated when the Indian Mines Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council in March 1899. An annoyed IMA voiced strong objection to the clauses now introduced into the Bill proposing to restrict and if necessary prohibit the employment of women and children in the mines. Whilst the Bill was going through Select Committee, on which Allan Arthur the non-official European Mercantile member represented the coal industry's views,[5] the IMA convened a Special Meeting on 12 February 1900, which came out strongly against the women and children clauses, and demanded that the General Rules to be framed for the mines should form part of the eventual Act itself and not be left to the discretion of the Executive.[6] Within three weeks of this meeting, however, hopes were again raised when the Select Committee, in

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1. Govt. ... Resolution 9 October 1896, IMA Report 1894-5, 1-3, Whitehead 61-2. Grundy positively argued for women workers by stating that there was 'not sufficient other work available for them, and none that pays them as well' and that working in the mines provided social contact with friends and relatives. Grundy, Report ... 1893-4, 72.

2. Govt. ... Resolution 9 October 1896, IMA Report 1895-6, 1. The firm in which Cable was a partner, Bird & Co., were the Managing Agents of the Burrakur Coal Company, whilst Miller was manager of the Equitable Coal Company. The Indian representative, Kumar Dakhineswar Malia, was the Managing Agent of the Searsole and Jemshiri collieries in Raniganj.

3. Namely Papers regarding Legislation for the Regulation and Sanitation of Mines in India. The Mining Committee's Report therein, dated 9 December 1895, emphasised that the Committee had functioned in effect only as a Coal Mines Committee, limiting its enquiries to Bengal alone.

4. IMA Report 1895-6, 1-2; 1896-7, 1-2.

5. Arthur, head of Ewing & Co. the Agents of the Great Eastern Coal Company, had been present at the June 1894 special meeting in his capacity as Chairman of the Bengal Chamber.

6. Once bitten, IMA members were disinclined to be over-trusting.

consequence of the IMA's many suggested amendments to the Bill, proposed its republication in amended form. As a consequence any further legislative Council proceedings on the Bill were postponed till the next cold weather session, by which time the IMA had sent in further views on the Bill in accordance with the February meeting.[1]

With the IMA Chairman, R.P. Ashton of Kilburn & Co., now representing the coal mining industry as a member of the Legislative Council and the Select Committee, the Association was able to apply considerable pressure during the renewed discussion on the Bill. 'Due in no small measure' to 'Mr. Ashton's energy and tact', the Association carried its main point. When the Bill became law in modified form in March 1901 as the Indian Mines Act, (Act VIII of 1901), it was observed that whilst Government had not agreed that the Rules be incorporated in the Act, a great non-official European victory had been won, with some Indian support, over the bitterly opposed women and children labour clauses, which Government agreed to delete.[2]

The next major issue to be taken up by the IMA, in a decade of trebling output, was that of obtaining an adequate supply of regular labour for the industry, and here after much discussion in 1894 and '95 the Association actively sought the help and intervention of Government. The IMA Committee drew upon its connection with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, emphasised by the use of a common Secretary, to ask the Chamber to intercede with Government on its behalf. What was asked for was that Government should use the district officers to disseminate information in densely populated labour recruitment areas about the advantages offered by employment in the mines: fair wages, free land, light work, good housing and medical attention. The Committee also heartily approved and readily adopted the Chamber's suggestion that the Bengal Government be requested to set up a Labour Enquiry Commission. In October 1895 the Chamber accordingly submitted a powerful representation to Government on the labour question, endorsing the IMA's call for a commission, but with reference to the tea districts as well as the coal mining areas. Government quickly responded and in November 1895 set up the desired Labour Enquiry Com-

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1. IMA Report 1899-1900, 2-3; 1900-1, 19-20; Leg.Cl. progs. 1899, XXXVIII, 186-91 and 1900, XXXIX, 14, 66. Though only two native collieries were IMA members in 1900 representatives of seventeen more native concerns were present at the February 1900 joint meeting of European and Native coal interests, demonstrating again that on mining and factory legislation there was little essential difference between the attitudes, as employers, of the Europeans and Indians.

2. IMA Report 1900-1, 20; 1901-2, ii; Leg. Cl. progs. 1901, XL, 1, 44, 192-229.

mission.[1]

The Commission found that there were 53,000 men, women and children employed in the some two hundred coal mines in Bengal in 1895.[2] The insufficiency of that labour force was caused not only by the mining districts, with the exception of Birbhum, being sparsely populated, but by the mining districts themselves and the adjacent areas being subject to recruitment for work in the north east Indian tea gardens. Moreover, the Commission found, the Sonthalis and Bauries who formed the bulk of the labour force were inclined to idle once their immediate wants were satisfied - a lack of work commitment in the mines was endemic throughout the labour force.[3] They therefore felt that greater attempts should be made to attract labour from new sources and in particular from the North-Western Provinces and Oudh. (Indeed, even the importation of more efficient Chinese labour was considered, but rejected as impolitic.)[4] The immediate outcome of the Labour Commission's findings, as far as the coal industry was concerned, was a proposal to set up a Mining Labour Association. This idea was pushed forward at a specially convened IMA meeting in mid February 1896[5] but the matter was later allowed to drop when famine in Bengal and the North-Western Provinces caused labour suddenly to become plentiful.[6]

In 1901 the Mines Act, after two years of debate, finally came into operation. The attention of the IMA was particularly directed to the provision in the Act empowering the Local Governments to constitute Mining Boards for their areas, whose principal duty would be to frame the code of rules

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1. IMA Report 1894-5, 4-5; 1895-6, 2-3. The Commission comprised a number of the same men who had sat on the Mining Committee that year. The same official was President, and its other members were: D.W.D. Commins, a surgeon, who was Inspector-General of Jails, Bengal, three representatives of European Managing Agencies with coal, tea and jute interests - namely E. Cable, H.C. Begg and W.B. Gladstone, and the one Indian as before, K.D. Malia. See also pages 155, 201 above for the reactions of the tea and jute industries.

2. Of the total workforce - two thirds of which was in the employ of IMA members - 32,300 worked underground, comprising 23,700 men, 7,400 women and 1,200 children.

3. Even pressures exerted on them through the owners' zamindary relationships with them as tenants were only partially successful.

4. LEC Report 2, 9, 10, 11, 17.

5. Non-IMA members with coal mining interests also participated in the meeting.

6. IMA Report 1896-7, 3.

governing coal mines and to dispose of appeals under those rules. Two members 'nominated by owners of mines or their representatives' were to sit on each Board, and, consulted by Government the IMA nominated as its first representatives on the Bengal Board A. Mackinnon (of Macneill & Co.), then IMA Chairman, and W. Miller, who had worked on the Mining Committee of 1895, and was both a Civil and Mining Engineer.[1] (The dominance on the technical side of the industry of professional engineers and their employment in line management positions, was indeed a feature of the mining industry - whereas in cotton and jute the engineers worked in staff functions with some assistants, line management at department level being in the hands of artisan experts.) By 1904 the Bengal Board with its IMA nominees had framed the Mining Rules required of it.[2]

1905 was the year which saw the creation of the Mining and Geological Institute of India to provide for the scientific study of mining methods and to explore the mineral resources of the country. It was matched on the practical side by Government's institution of a mining instruction scheme leading to the award of a Mine Manager's Certificate. Here again the IMA was asked to play a part by providing representatives on the Board of Examiners.[3]

During 1905 the IMA Committee closely followed the proceedings of the Government Committee of Enquiry into the general question of labour as affecting mills, mines and other industries in Bengal and the United Provinces, and even more closely perhaps the proceedings of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee of 1906. 'While we sympathise with our Assam friends over their labour difficulties' stated the IMA Chairman, 'we stoutly protest against the recruitment of /tea/ labour from the colliery districts ... of Burdwan, Manbhoom and Hazaribagh'. With no labour to spare in such places as Raniganj, Asansol and Jherria, tea recruitment there would mean 'the enticing and abducting of labor already settled at the different collieries'.[4]

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1. Ibid. 1901-2, 2-4. On Mackinnon's death in 1902 a barrister, W.Graham, took his place on the Board, serving down to the 1920's with engineering experts from the Bengal Coal Company.

2. Ibid. 1902-3, 3; 1903-4, iii.

3. Whitehead 63, W.H. Pickering, Report of the Chief Inspector of Mines in India 1905, 11-14 and ibid. 1906, 17-18. The hope of the IMA that it would be given representation on the Board of the Bengal Boiler Commission was not, however, fulfilled. IMA Report 1908, 24.

4. IMA Report 1905-6, 4-5; 1906, 4. Till 1906 the IMA issued annual reports to the end of February. That year they issued a bridging ten months report to the end of December and from 1907 the reporting period co-incided with the calendar year.

Two years later, in March 1908, it was the formation of so many new mining companies that was exacerbating the labour supply problem with the established companies suffering from the spread of the available labour force over a wider range of mines.[1] The labour supply difficulties were doubly irritating when the industry was otherwise prospering, output having advanced from the 6.1 million tons in 1900 to a new record level of 12.8 million tons in 1908.[2] Some assistance was, however, to be forthcoming - centred on communication and welfare improvements which would facilitate the recruitment and retention of the labour force. The visit of Sir Edward Baker, the Bengal Lieutenant-Governor, to the Jherria coalfield in November 1909 to see the industry's progress at first hand provided an opportunity for the IMA Chairman W.A. Lee[3] to place before him requests for improvement not only of roads in the district but of sanitation and water supplies. In reply he received assurances of Government attention and support in these matters, but more particularly a promise of quick action on the health aspect.[4] A Bengal Legislative Council Select Committee was accordingly appointed on which Norman McLeod gave valuable assistance.[5] The outcome of its work was the Bengal Mining Settlements Act, No. II of 1912, which provided for a Mines Board of Health for each mining district, for sanitary officers, and for compelling mine- and land-owners to carry out sanitary measures in areas

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1. See remarks of the IMA Chairman at the Association's AGM 6.3.1908. By the following year there were 'something like 300 collieries at work' within the Jherria coalfield alone. IMA Report 1909, 99, quoting Englishman 1.12.1909.

2. 1908 saw record prices as well as output which gave coal the leading position in the mineral industries of India. (Even the record pit-mouth prices, however, were lower than in other countries due both to the cheapness of labour and the ease of working of shallow pits.) Bengal's share had risen to ninety per cent of Indian output, with the Jherria field and the Raniganj-Giridh coalfields contributing all but a million tons or so of the total. See StMMPr 1901-02, 235; 1908-9, 54; 1911-12, 266 and IMA Report 1914, 77.

3. Lee's firm, Hoare, Miller & Co., were the Managing Agents of the Jherria Colliery Company.

4. IMA Report 1909, 12-13, 93-101. There had been plague in the Jherria bazaar in 1905 and the cholera outbreak of 1908 had illustrated the urgency of the problem. W.A. Lee and R.P. Ashton had represented the IMA at a conference with Government in April 1909 to discuss the sanitation problem and agreement had then been reached in principle to effect improvements through amending legislation. As Lee was now assured, Government were about to bring in the Bill required.

5. His firm, McLeod & Co., held the Managing Agency of five coal mining companies in 1909, see Thacker's 1909, Calcutta section 112. McLeod himself served on the Bengal Council as representative of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

brought under the Act. In 1914 the Jharia Water-Supply Act, (Bihar and Orissa No. III of 1914), was passed which was to bring to that coalfield 'some of the best drinking water in the whole country'.[1] The IMA found both measures very satisfactory.

Meanwhile the three year extraordinary boom in the coal industry which had continued till 1908 had ceased; the average price of top quality Bengal coal was halved by 1911.[2] Of all the industries in India coal-mining was perhaps the most sensitive and volatile in its reactions to wider movements in the economy, but basically, despite this abrupt reverse, it was sound and its prospects encouraging. It continued therefore even in these slack years to press Government hard to improve India's inadequate rail transport system. This was an old problem - the 1899-1900 IMA Report for example had stressed the serious shortfall in the supply of wagons - 3,600 open wagons asked for, 1,575 received[3] - and with new wagon purchases by Government failing to keep pace with the demand,[4] the vast expansion of the industry had worsened the position, which would remain acute until the early 1920's.[5] The IMA in 1910 reacted vigorously therefore when Government expressed its intention of cutting back railway development.[6] With coal exports from Calcutta at 2.8 million tons in 1911[7] the IMA also put pressure on the Port Commission of the city to provide additional mechanical handling plant.[8] An IMA meeting in September 1912 went further and adopted a transport facilities memorial for submission

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1. IMA Report 1909, 101; 1912, 29; 1914, 2-6, StMMPr 1911-12, 73, Whitehead, 63.

2. See Chairman's remarks at IMA annual meeting 22.2.1910, and IMA Report 1920, 279 giving average prices for Bengal coal in 1908, 1909 and 1911 as 6 Rs. 12as., 4Rs. 12as. and 3Rs. 12as.

3. IMA Report 1899-1900, 79, giving letter 15-18.1.1900 from Agent East Indian Railway Company to Secretary IMA.

4. Ibid., 1900-1, 21; 1901-2, 5.

5. See for example IMA Report 1919, 5: 'Wagon and transport facilities ... which [topic] has for so many years given rise to so much discussion, has again been prominently before the Committee during the past year'.

6. Ibid., 1910, 4-5. An Indian railway enquiry committee at work in 1907-8 had recommended an annual capital expenditure of £12.5 million on the country's railways, but sums allotted by Government had been falling short of that figure, and the current intention seemed to be to further reduce the annual appropriation.

7. The leading exporters in order were, (figures in millions of tons): Macneill 0.4, Heilgers 0.35, Yule 0.33, Bengal Coal Co. 0.32, Mackinnon, Mackenzie 0.31, Jardine, Skinner 0.28, Bird 0.19, Balmer, Lawrie 0.11. See IMA Report 1911, 51.

8. Ibid., iii.

to the Secretary of State for India, the presentation of which was followed up in June 1913 by a deputation to the Secretary of State from the East India Section of the London Chamber of Commerce.[1] Though little concrete came out of these pressure tactics at the time[2] it was felt that some better understanding of the coal industry's problems had emerged from the presentation of the memorial, especially among officials in India, where government increased somewhat the financial grants to the local railways and lent an attentive ear to the port facilities problem.[3]

In 1911 it was not expansion, or the problems which that created, which held IMA attention but a major political event - the holding of the Delhi Durbar and the announcement there of the transfer of the capital of British India from Calcutta to Delhi, the undoing of the partition of Bengal and the formation of a new province of Bihar and Orissa. The moving of the capital to Delhi was a blow to all non-official European bodies centred on Calcutta, but it was the creation of Bihar and Orissa[4] which most immediately concerned the IMA, since the boundaries of the new province cut through a major coal field. The coal industry, supported by zamindars of the area and those with iron and copper works there, memorialised the Viceroy, pleading for the retention of the Manbhum District and the Dhalbhum Pargana region of the Singhbhum District within the boundaries of Bengal. They emphasised that the industry of this coal-mining area looked to Calcutta for its outlet and was dominated by that city. Capitalists in Calcutta had readily invested in the industry's development in the past, but there was good reason to fear that this flow of capital would be no longer forthcoming if the Government headquarters responsible for the industry was transferred from Calcutta to Patna, the capital of Bihar and Orissa.[5] Disappointment at the rejection of this

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1. The deputation was headed by the Section's Chairman C.C. McLeod, London partner of the Calcutta firm of that name and included Sir Ralph Ashton a past President of the IMA.

2. Lord Crewe the Secretary of State jibbed particularly at the IMA's request that railway companies should be precluded from acquiring collieries and raising coal for their own use.

3. IMA Report 1913, v, xi, 3-4, and London C/Comm Report 1913, 104.

4. From 1912 Bihar became the usual spelling, the older Behar being dropped. In this thesis the old spelling has been used in chapters I to V and the new thereafter.

5. See Memorial of Colliery Proprietors and Land Owners and other Industrial Enterprises in the District of Manbhoom and Pargana Dhalbhoom, in IMA Report 1911, 162-3.

plea was mixed however with great satisfaction that the coal industry was to be given representation on the Legislative Council of the new province. The creation of a Bihar and Orissa Mining Board - the first new Mining Board set up since that for Bengal a decade previously - also meant that the IMA could nominate two representatives thereto, the first being R.G.M. Bathgate (East Indian Coal Co.) and T.H. Ward (East Indian Railway Collieries) - both of them professional engineers.[1] After these dramatic events, however, the record till 1914 was of continuous progress by the coal industry[2] to match India's economic growth.

The outlook was no less rosy for the other fuel, oil, coming into large scale production in Burma[3] from the late 1880's and on a much more modest scale in Assam, Eastern Bengal and the Punjab from the turn of the century. By 1909 the Indian oil industry was already producing 230 million gallons a year.[4] Initially oil was used in the form of kerosene mainly for lighting, but the coming of the motor car to India foreshadowed the rise of petroleum. The expanding market came to be dominated in most of India by the Burmah Oil Company.[4]

To the major industries so far considered must be added a considerable number of smaller industries reflecting the diversity of European entrepreneurship in India. Gold mining, centred around Mysore where deep mines were made possible only by western technology, had boomed in the 'seventies, crashed in the early 'eighties, and was now prospering again,[5] as was the exotic extraction industry represented by the Burma Ruby Mines Company which had commenced operations in 1889 and remained profitable in a small market.[6] A third such industry, iron mining, was in its infancy.[7] There were many

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1. IMA Report 1912; 2, 4, Thacker's 1912, list of residents, 22, 320.

2. Output by then had reached sixteen million tons.

3. Rapidly developing Burma was raised from a Chief Commissionership to a Lieutenant-Governorship in 1897.

4. Burma Admin. Report 1903-04, 21, StMMPr 1909-10, 54, Imperial Gazetteer of India, Burma I, 75, Anstey 26. See also B. Dasgupta, The Oil Industry in India, ch. 2.

5. StMMPr 1909-10, 54; 1911-12, 266-7. For accounts of the gold mining industry in India in the latter nineteenth century see articles in South of India Observer 3.2. to 10.3.1883 and Elliot, ch. VII.

6. Burma Admin. Report 1888-89, 51; 1903-04, 21; 1911-12, 71.

7. In 1911 the industry's leader was the London registered Bengal Iron and Steel Company Limited which had a capital of £150,000 and collieries at Barakar and Jherria. See StMMPr 1911-12, 268, Thacker's 1911, commercial industries section, 43.

engineering and foundry works, with a major concentration in Bengal, close to coal and iron but also to port facilities through which materials could be imported for fabrication in India.[1] To these firms, busy with municipal orders for water and sewage works equipment, lamp-posts, latrines and park railings, and with work for the port trusts, a major grievance was the operation of the rules governing Government purchase of stores. The market which Government orders provided was a major one, and they fought hard to induce the Home authorities to place more orders in India, and to provide for rupee tendering for Government contracts.[2] Everywhere there were tile and brick works, of which the Frizzoni concern in Allahabad might serve as an example, encouraged by urban growth and by railway and other public works, and more localised there were breweries, paper mills, such as the Couper concern in Lucknow, and the very important railway workshops. Other European dominated industries were the lumbering and sawmilling of Burmese teak in which the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation was prominent, and the leather industry, of which Cooper, Allen's in Cawnpore, which supplied boots to the whole British army in India, was a particularly large scale example,[3] and Parry's of Madras, a pioneer, one that abandoned tanning early in the twentieth century.[4]

The vigour, spread and significance of these many industries and business firms drew a response from Government. In 1905 a separate Department of Commerce and Industry was brought into being by Curzon, and Local Governments were encouraged to convene conferences and organise exhibitions in their support. (From 1905, too, all-India industrial conferences were held in connection with the Indian National Congress on a regular annual basis.) 'Though India remains pre-eminently an agricultural country, ... the advance of organised industries', Government noted in 1912, 'has been a notable feature of recent years'.[5]

There were also many European business enterprises whose activities lay

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1. Thacker's 1911 commercial industries section, 42-5.

2. For discussion of the question see S.K. Sen, Studies in Economic Policy and Development of India (1848-1939), ch. II. The issue of standing orders in 1909 that 'stores required by Government shall, as far as practicable, be purchased in India', flowed however from the Swadeshi movement rather than from non-official European pressure. StMMPr 1909-10, 56.

3. H.R. Nevill, Allahabad: A Gazetteer, 64; ibid., Lucknow: A Gazetteer, 49; ibid., Cawnpore: ..., 78-82; and "Nibs"/for activities of the Bombay-Burma ... Corporation. /H. Nisbet/, Experiences of a Jungle-Wallah, H. Brown,

4. /Parry's of Madras, 159.

5. StMMPr 1909-10, 56, ibid., 1911-12, 272, United Provinces ... Admin.Report 1909-10, 30 and 1910-11, 32-3, and The Congress, Conferences & Conventions of '09., 81.

somewhere on the margins of trade and industry, since they were concerned with buying raw materials and with their preliminary processing. The rice mills of Burma, husking and polishing rice before its export, were one example,[1] sugar and flour mills another, raw jute baling and pressing yet another and the cotton presses and ginning factories of western India a further major example. If they organised to further industrial interests, as the jute firms for example did, they usually were attached to the Presidency Chambers of Commerce, but they could also voice their demands through the major Managing Agencies which handled their operations.

In Bombay, however, such European firms also had their own Bombay Cotton Trade Association, formed in 1875. This Association had a predominantly European complexion, both in membership and in committee structure, which was the cause of considerable dissatisfaction to the Indian cotton merchants and millowners of Western India.[2] The dominance was firmly based however on European control of some three quarters of Bombay's export trade in raw cotton.[3] Firms such as W. Nicol & Co., Volkart Brothers, Gaddum & Co., Ralli Brothers and the Finlay companies were among the export leaders. Such firms had not confined themselves to the export trade but were active in the up-country cotton trade and had gone into cotton manufacturing and its ancillary industries.[4] Both George Cotton and H.R. Greaves combined leadership roles in the BMA with high office in the Cotton Trade Association as well and the European secretarial offices of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce 'administered' this body too.[5]

Though these close linkages lent weight to the voice of both Associations, their unison was not always easy to sustain. given the sometimes conflicting interests of trade and industry. Thus the cotton traders had long sought Government intervention to prevent the adulteration of raw cotton, and Regulation III of 1829 and Acts of 1851 and 1863 had been passed accordingly, providing formal inspection procedures. The European firms trading up-country

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1. The Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation was dominant in this. In Burma in 1911 there were 152 rice mills and 82 saw mills.

2. Dantwala 64-77, Thacker's 1888, 980, and ibid. 1913, Bombay section, 62.

3. A.M. Vicziani, The Cotton Trade and the Commercial Development of Bombay, 1855-1875, 198.

4. Vicziani, 212-18. Finlay's, which at the end of the nineteenth century were largely interested in tea, were to considerably widen their cotton and jute interests in the years to follow.

5. Thacker's 1887, 970, and 1913, Bombay section, 62.

were pleased with these measures, which could be used as a coercive instrument against native cotton merchants from whom they were buying. Its application to the vicinity of Bombay City, where there were many European concerns pressing cotton, was regarded by such houses with a far more jaundiced eye, given the difficulty of ascertaining whether adulteration had been intentionally caused or not. In 1869 the Bombay Chamber therefore waged a successful battle on behalf of the European processing interests involved against the Government attempt to bring in a Bill to improve or elaborate on the system of inspection in Bombay Island where European companies had been benefiting from a less strict cotton inspection than had native concerns. The Chamber kept up a continued, steady resistance on the question right into the 'seventies[1] so that in 1882 Government, in so many words, conceded defeat and all special cotton frauds legislation was repealed.[2] Officialdom brought the matter up again in 1891, but the forwarding of the Chamber's protest to the Bombay Administration led Government to back down once again.[3]

Bodies such as the Bombay Cotton Trade Association or the Calcutta Tea Traders' Association, though powerful enough in themselves, normally functioned under the wing of the Chamber of Commerce of the presidency city concerned. But there were also large numbers of small trading firms either unorganised or, in the three presidency cities and other major trading centres, represented through a general trades association. These associations had been of considerable significance in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, but with the growth and consolidation of large-scale planting and manufacturing industries in the second half of the century, brought together within the major Chambers of Commerce, these general trade associations lost influence.

Though often looked down upon, the traders and tradesmen tended at least to be ubiquitous, (unlike the 'gentlemen' merchants who preferred to keep to the coast), and an up-country cantonment, or for that matter a sudder township, would have been atypical indeed had it not included a Cutfisher & Co. dealing in wines, mineral waters, provisions and tobacco, a Huckaback & Co., booksellers, printers, publishers and stationers, a Tusk and Podgett, milliners, tailors and outfitters, Herr Blitzen, the German photographer and portrait painter, Foldy, Riddle & Co., the piano, band instrument and music warehouse, Linseed the chemist, and Signor Campobasso the Italian confectioner, together

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1. See for example public meeting 23.3.1877 called by the Bombay Chamber to oppose new legislation on the subject.

2. Vicziani, 304-35, Sulivan, 78-88.

3. Bombay C/Comm Report 1891, 182-3, Sulivan 112-3.

with the boot and shoe maker, the art furniture dealers, the ladies' dressmaker, the hairdresser, and kindred others of this class.[1] But widespread though they were the up-country tradesmen engaging in small retail and craft establishments and unorganised as a class had only minimal influence upon Government. Even in the presidency and larger towns, where their numbers included some large retail and wholesale establishments, and where general trade organisations had been established, they carried far less weight than the Chambers of Commerce. Trades associations in consequence confined themselves largely to very local matters, such as trade credit or octroi procedures. When their say on national matters was asked for from time to time by Government, as one of the many opinions Government sought, their function seemed usually to be that of adding further backing to the viewpoint put forward by the local Chamber. They might in the larger towns provide a member from the European ward of a municipality or even achieve representation on a presidency Corporation as of right, but even then they rarely provided leadership.

The first general European trades association in India was that of Calcutta, established in 1830. A quarter of a century later, in 1856, the Madras Trades Association was formed,[2] to be followed by similar associations in Bombay and Rangoon in 1868 and 1870. In Karachi, however, the last of the four great port towns of the Indian sub-continent, a similar trades association seems never to have appeared.[3]

The Madras Trades Association, whose objects included 'the protection of the interests of Trade generally and particularly' and 'the encouragement, and, when applicable, the enforcement of a system of ready money payments', was the weakest of the four port trades associations. Though it started off well, its membership increasing from 29 in 1859 to 46 in 1861, with a branch in Bangalore, by 1869 membership had dropped to 13 and by 1882 to a mere 8![4]

The struggling Association did not die, it attracted significant individuals, C.H. Higginbotham of the well-known booksellers of that name and representatives of Spencer's the railway caterers and department store for example,

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1. See H. Hervey, The European in India, 33, 65-6. This book gives satirical sketches of the life of non-official European prototypes in India in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.
2. Report of the Proceedings of the Calcutta Trade Association ... 1830, to ... 1850, 9, C.S. Srinivasachari, History of the City of Madras, 312.
3. The absence of mention of such association in the trade history of the town given in B.Temple, The Karachi Handbook, 1914., 67-9, and in J.Leonbard, Karachi: Guide and Directory, 1911, is notable, though a Punjab Trades Association had been in existence in the 1890's, see CTA Report 1894, 55.
4. The Indian membership, three in 1861, had vanished by 1882.

and pushed membership back into the twenties after 1900.[1] But its membership did not embrace even a fair proportion of the European trades in the city and its occasional move as in opposing the Madras City Civil Court Bill in 1892[2] cannot have carried much weight with Government.[3]

In Rangoon a trades association was established in 1870.[4] There are no signs of its existence in the 1880's and early 1890's[5] but it revived towards the end of that decade[6] and in 1910 - with offices at Phayre Street and J. McGeachin of the large general trading establishment of Rowe & Co. as President - its membership had grown to 35. It had its representation on the local Port Trust, and as reports in the Press reveal, was active in many spheres. Thus, in 1910, in addition to protesting about its lack of representation in the local Legislative Council under the new Indian Councils Act, it had voiced its views on the working of the Pasteur Institute, the registration of domestic servants, the failings of the Burma High Court and of the telegraphic department, on Rangoon foreshore facilities and on land leases in the town.[7]

The Trades' Association of Bombay, two years the senior of Rangoon, did not live so long. Founded in 1868,[8] with the protection of trade interests in general and the encouragement of a system of cash transactions more particularly set out in its objectives, it never proved a very lively or numerous body. The most prominent figures in the Association in its first fifteen years were J.P. Watson, outfitter and jeweller, and the representative of Kemps, the chemists.[9] These two were still on the committee in 1883 when the Association

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1. F.J. Dawes was an active Secretary in this period. He was a government pensioner and served as Deputy Sheriff of Madras in 1909.

2. The Madras Government had sought to combat the non-official opposition to its plan to transfer some of the High Court jurisdiction to the Court of Small Causes by proposing to set up a Civil Court to which such jurisdiction would be transferred instead.

3. /Lawrence/ Asylum Press, The Madras New Almanack and Compendium of Intelligence for the year 1860; Ibid., The Asylum Press Almanack and Compendium of Intelligence for the year 1862; Ibid., (varying titles) 1870-1910, Madras C/Comm Report 1892, vii-ix, 10-12, and Indian Spectator, Voice of India and Champion 29.7.1905.

4. CTA Report 1870, 8.

5. No mention of such an association thus appears in G.W.D. Vauz, Burma Pocket Almanack and Directory, 1886, nor in Ibid., D'Vauz's Burma Pocket Almanack and Directory for 1891.

6. See Thacker's 1899, 1823 mentioning W.J.H. Redmond as Secretary.

7. The Asylum Press Almanack ... 1910, 1963 and Rangoon Gazette 7.3.1910.

8. CTA Report 1868, 8.

9. The Times of India, The "Times of India" Bombay Calendar & Directory for 1871; Ibid. ... Calendar and Bombay Directory for 1875 and ... for 1883.

came out in support of the Chamber of Commerce in denouncing the Ilbert Bill. Other representatives were from Messrs Rose and Messrs Soundy, both dealers in musical instruments, and from Thacker's the booksellers.[1] The Secretary, W.J. Farrow, an accountant, seems to have served continuously from 1873 (following two previous incumbents) until the mid-1890's. The same names regularly occur - N. Randle of Thacker's was Chairman in 1890 and his fellow committeemen, representatives of Messrs Watson, Soundy, Hoar and Hamilton, were still in office with him five years later. The membership, too, seems to have been static, and certainly was small[2] - indeed the most obvious signs of life were provided by the movement of its offices in the 1880's and 1890's from 42 Medows Street to 9 Hummum Street and then to Bell Lane. Since there is little evidence of any political activity, the Association ought perhaps to be seen rather as a business advice and debt collecting bureau, dissolving in 1895 not from lack of causes, perhaps, but because of the retirement (or death) of its long-term Secretary.[3] However, following 'a shadowy existence in the Bombay commercial world' a new or revived Bombay Presidency Trade Association was 'established on a firm basis ... in 1904' and started to busy iself with the location of the Central Parcels Post Office, the duty-free importation of goods by military officers, the problem of dust abatement in the city, collection of debts with recourse to law and other such matters of interest to traders.[4] By 1912 it had 39 members - all European - and had moved from its previous premises into new offices at 32 Hornby Road.[5]

Of the general European trades associations in India the Calcutta Trade(s') Association - the CTA - was indubitably the most important.[6] It was the oldest

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1. Ibid. ... 1883, 949 and ... Calendar and Directory for 1890, 852-3, and P.P. 1884, LX, 594-5.

2. Membership, not given in the annual directories, was probably under twenty and possibly under ten.

3. The "Times of India" Bombay Calendar & Directory for 1872, 682, ibid. ... for 1873, 292, ibid. ... Calendar and Directory for 1890, 843, ibid. ... for 1895, 860, Thacker's 1895, 1146. The purported existence of the Association after 1895 given in the Bombay Directories is not borne out by Thacker's.

4. S.M. Edwardes, The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island., I, 457-8.

5. The Times of India Calendar and Directory for 1912, 443.

6. The absence of the Reports and Minutes of the previous trade associations mentioned has hampered any detailed reconstruction of their activities. They obviously communicated with their Local Governments and Municipalities at times (no doubt with a modicum of success) and on at least two issues (those of the Ilbert Bill controversy and the Morley-Minto reforms) were active in the all-India sphere. By contrast, and whilst there may have been the occasional exception, these associations neither held protest meetings nor mounted Press campaigns. If anything the Rangoon Association appeared to be the one to which the Local Government paid most respect, due perhaps to the organisational backwardness of Burma's indigenous population.

public body in India, it was close to the ear of Government, in the cold weather anyway, and its membership was large, seeming to settle at between 60 and 70 towards the end of the nineteenth century.[1] Notwithstanding these assets however, its influence became increasingly local and narrow, less and less national. It tended to follow the Bengal Chamber rather than to initiate,[2] and when once (after 1883) it had dropped the custom established in 1861 of holding an annual dinner with prominent official and non-official personalities as guests even its one day a year importance passed away. Dinnerless 1884[3] marked the clear end of any national leadership.[4] When, after years of pressure on Government, it was allowed in 1883 to become incorporated, its Memorandum of Association was signed as Master by D.J. Zemin - a partner in a firm of cabinet makers and importers - and by two jewellers, a gunmaker, a bookseller, a cabinet maker, a tailor, a watch maker and a draper.[5] Such men were unlikely to have extended views or influence.[6] Though the local European community papers such as the Englishman and the Statesman were also members of the CTA,[7] their influence was exerted through the news and views that they printed, not through their membership of any trades association.[8]

Because, however, of its early start in 1830 and its inclusion thereafter in the government list of public bodies from which 'opinions' were regularly sought, the CTA had a considerable idea of its own importance. Yet often, when asked, it proved to be out of its depth. Thus while it pressed Government in

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1. See, for example, CTA Reports 1883 and 1900 showing 65 and 69 members.

2. As in opposition to the Ilbert Bill and proposed factory legislation. See CTA Reports 1880, 1883, 1891.

3. Thenceforth Calcutta's St. Andrew's Day dinner was left without a rival.

4. CTA Report 1883, 25, ibid. 1899 190 ff., and The Cyclopedia of India, II, 283-4. After a fifteen year gap the CTA annual dinners were renewed in 1899, but the interval had diminished their significance.

5. CTA Report 1897, 115. In accordance with its Articles of Association the CTA's formal name from 1883 was Calcutta Trades Association. However both in its Reports and correspondence thereafter it also continued to employ the style Trades' in its title.

6. The first of the CTA's objects, as it had been of the Bombay and Madras Associations, had been 'to encourage the adoption of the system of ready money payment', see Report of the Proceedings of the Calcutta Trade Association ... 1830, to ... 1850., 13-14.

7. See for example CTA Report 1883.

8. 'The high journalistic standard maintained by the Pioneer has contributed largely to the improvement which has taken place in the tone of the Indian Press' noted Viceroy Elgin in recommending its founder G.W. Allen for a Knighthood in 1897, (Elgin P. MSS. Eur. F. 14/15, 89). See also S. Reed, The India I Knew 1897-1947, ch.2 'Growth of Public Opinion'. For historical surveys of the European managed Press in India see Natarajan, and M. Barns, The Indian Press.

1884, with the Bengal and Bombay Chambers, for more railway development, 'a question which concerns all classes of the community', when the new Railways Bill was duly submitted to it for opinion the following year its committee had 'no special suggestions' to offer. It was perhaps a little self important when in 1899 it proferred its approval of Government's intended relaxation of the regulation which limited the Presidency Banks' power to make advances against Assisted Railways and District Board securities, though it doubtless spoke with much authority here on the credit needs of its members. It certainly was so when its Master expressed a 'confident' hope that Government would heed the Association's views on a fixed gold-silver ratio, important though the issue was to traders buying in gold standard Britain to sell in a 'silver' India. It also had its moments, as when it managed to get Government to retract disparaging remarks about the mercantile community. (Made in the Bengal Government's Resolution on the administration of the Income Tax for the year 1890-91 which had hinted at fictitious business accounts being rendered to avoid income tax payment.)[1]

There were all-India matters on which the CTA's voice deserved to be heard - matters like the 'unfair' competition of foreign arms dealers, or the terms of the Bill to amend the Law of Limitations, or innovations in the postal service,[2] but its most obvious sphere was that of Calcutta itself and its local hinterland. Here, it devoted much attention to problems of court administration - the need to improve and speed up the working of the Small Cause Court and to increase the number of magistrates in the Police Court - for example, or the appointment and attendance of jurors and witnesses.[3] Municipal affairs also occupied a great deal of its time as indeed they had done as far back as the 1830's.[4] Under the Calcutta Municipality Act of 1876 for example, the Calcutta Corporation was to consist of 72 members, 54 elected by the urban rate- and tax payers and 18 nominated by the Local Government.[5] Since the general electorate was overwhelmingly Indian, and the eighteen nominations were made entirely at the Government's discretion, the European representation was both small and uncertain. The CTA therefore pressed for a strengthening of the European element in the corporation,[6] and it was in part as a consequence

1. CTA Report 1884, 15; 1885, 26; 1891, 23-87; 1899, 53.
2. Ibid. 1907, 18-20.
3. Ibid. 1891, 13-14; 1899, 37-8; 1906, 36 and 1910, 46, 60.
4. See K. Choudhuri, Calcutta: Story of its Government, 50.
5. Ibid., 105.
6. CTA Report 1887, 121.

of such pleadings that when the Calcutta Municipal Consolidation Act II (Bengal) of 1888 raised the Corporation's strength to 75, while fifty members were to be elected, Government nominations were reduced to 10, and the Bengal Chamber, the CTA and the Port Commissioners were allowed to elect the remainder in the ratio of 4:4:2.[1] Of the CTA's representatives to the Calcutta Corporation in the two decades from 1889 when the Act came into force, half a dozen - W.H. Phelps, J.G. Womack, F.A. Larmour, W.J. Bradshaw, H. Elsworthy and E.B. Eden, associated in order with two tailoring establishments, a cabinet makers, a sports goods dealers, and Messrs Osler and Messrs Newman the large glassware and bookselling stores - came to be honoured by the Mastership of the CTA in the thirty years down to 1913.[2] Similarly when the Calcutta Port Trust was being reconstructed under Bengal Act III of 1887, the CTA was given a representative thereon as of right rather than as a Government nominee, in which capacity the Association's Master in 1881 - manager of an ironmongery establishment - had previously been serving.[3] Public recognition was thus assured for the ambitious or altruistic member of the CTA who was prepared to serve his city.[4]

Perhaps by comparison with the Bengal Chamber of Commerce the CTA was a modest body, yet with agents in Britain[5] and the firm and active hold retained on it by E. Hickie its longterm Secretary[6] it was the outstanding trades association in the country. Moreover it had the active support of the leading financial newspaper of the day, the Calcutta weekly Capital, whose proprietor and editor Shirley Tremearne became a committee member, it was strategically sited from 1908 with its headquarters in the Dalhousie Institute, and it was deeply involved in major municipal matters such as the Calcutta Improvement Scheme. With a membership steadily growing, to eighty three by 1915, it saw to it that even if its concerns were local rather than national, Government remained well aware of its existence.

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1. Choudhuri, 145-6.

2. See list of CTA Masters to 1908 in The Cyclopedia of India, II, 284, and CTA Report 1914,-.

3. CTA Report 1888, 22-3. A like raising of representation on the Bengal Council from nomination to one of accorded right was to follow in due course.

4. Aspiring or public-spirited Chamber of Commerce members were assured of greater recognition. See article 'Bengal Chamber' in Commerce 7.9.1910 discussing that Chamber's 'position in the social system' and the fact of non-officials striving for a place on its committee as 'a jumping-off ground' for the Chamber's presidentship, thereby leading to entry into the Bengal and Indian Legislative Councils and hence to a possible Knighthood or at least the honour of a C.I.E.

5. The London Merchants and Traders Association.

6. Hickie had been appointed CTA Secretary in June 1868 and served till 1911 when he was succeeded by the Association's Assistant Secretary, H.C. Jewell.

Hovering at the side of trade and commerce were the non-official professional groups. Some, such as pharmacists and opticians, often combined the exercise of professional skills with the management of retail establishments which brought them within the category of traders also. Others offered a strictly personal service - as did music teachers, entertainers, private doctors and dentists and nurses, male and female,[1] governesses and tutors[2] - and so lay outside the boundaries of the business world.[3] But there was also a large and important group of professionally qualified men who worked within that world, many indeed being employed as salaried staff of trading and commercial concerns.[4] Firms like Bird & Co., the large contractors, for example, had much use for men with professional and technical skills in engineering and building, whilst the banks naturally employed some qualified accountants and the newspapers professional journalists. Others in such categories were either self-employed as professionals or worked as partners or staff in professional offices.[5] This independent professional class embraced the accountancy firms - such as the important Calcutta firm of Lovelock and Lewes, who were the Defence Association's auditors, or the Fraser & Ross office, a leading firm in the Madras Presidency - architects, surveyors and auctioneers, actuaries, insurance agents and adjusters, solicitors (such as the eminent firms of Sanderson and Orr, Dignam in Calcutta), the correspondents in India of the Times and Reuter's, and so on. Some were to form professional societies of their own, as did the engineers, the accountants and the solicitors, and that influential group of High Court advocates which in Calcutta included such men as Pugh and Evans.

The lawyers were exceptional among the non-official European professionals in making a distinct contribution to the political or pressure-group activities of their community, and their importance can be seen in the advice, counsel and help which they gave to the Defence Association, to other organisations

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1. Most non-official European nursing was carried on by the missionaries, but some European women outside the missionary fold were associated with Lady Minto's Indian Nursing Association and the Dufferin Hospitals, whilst a small number practised privately. See A. Wilkinson, A Brief History of Nursing in India and Pakistan.

2. School and college teachers of course would come under the heading of salaried staff.

3. Numbers of these persons served in the Native States.

4. The European compositors employed by the newspapers were skilled technicians rather than professional men. Others of this technicians class were those who ran printing presses or motor mechanics.

5. Though the professional firms were 'certainly interested in business' only a minority went as far as the Bombay Chamber's solicitors did and actually joined the local Chamber. See Sulivan, 274.

such as BIPA, and to the community leadership hierarchy as a whole when controversial legislation was under discussion. But if the voice of the lawyers was clearly heard, that of most other professional men was either blended with that of/the firms which employed them, or individually proved too faint to be heard.[1] The legal men and the important independent British Press and newsagency correspondents apart, the influence upon Government of the non-official professional group as a group was minimal.[2]

By contrast, the European Chambers of Commerce in India represented the most universally important pressure group of the community. Not all the Chambers were individually powerful instruments of opinion - there was a very clear hierarchy among them. Some like the Tuticorin Chamber with its membership of twelve hardly warranted the status of a Chamber,[3] others like the Cochin and Narayanganj (formerly Eastern Bengal and Assam) Chambers were essentially parochial in their outlook, while the Chamber which served the port of Chittagong[4] and the Punjab Chamber, both middle rankers, were late developers, given significance in the one case by the Partition of Bengal in 1905 and in the other by the move of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. Above these in general importance stood the Upper India Chamber at Cawnpore, and at the top the 'big five', namely the Rangoon, Karachi, Madras, Bombay and Bengal Chambers, with the last named head and shoulders in importance above all the rest.[5] Though the occasional Indian firm was a member of the Bengal Chamber during the period under review in this work, and in the Bombay Chamber relations between European and Indian member firms were especially harmonious,[6] the Chambers listed were to all intents and purposes European in their character except for the untypical Punjab Chamber.[7]

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1. E.E. Meugens, a Calcutta Chartered Accountant, was however specially nominated to the Indian Legislative Council in 1913 in connection with Companies legislation then under consideration. See Capital 16.1.1913.

2. European professionals and administrators were employed by municipalities, district boards, port trusts and the like. Such persons, however, were semi-officials rather than non-officials.

3. See Thacker's 1909, 490, and ibid. 1913, 546.

4. The Chamber was founded in the year 1905-6.

5. Following the opening of the Suez Canal, Aden and the adjacent Perim Island had prospered enormously as free port and coaling stations. In the circumstances one would have expected the Aden Chamber to have had pretensions to importance, but, as R.J. Gavin, Aden under the British Rule 1839-1967 188, has noted: 'the managers of the great companies scarcely bothered to attend ... meetings'.

6. Illustrated, for example, by the temperate nature of this Chamber's opposition to the Ilbert Bill, calculated to avoid upsetting the good feelings in existence between the European and Indian members.

7. In early 1907 - soon after its foundation - this Chamber's Indian membership stood at just under one quarter of the total; by 1917, however, it had increased to three sevenths.

Initially there were no comparable Indian organisations,[1] so that the European Chambers made all the running, and even when Indians determined to push 'national interests on the commercial plane' did form their own Chambers such as the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce formed in Calcutta in 1887, the Indian Merchants' Chamber at Bombay founded twenty years later, and the Southern Indian Chamber in Madras in 1909,[2] they never overtook the lead established by the European Chambers whose influence with Government remained paramount.

The European Chambers, as will already be evident, acted as the channels through which Government sought opinions on economic and other issues affecting the community's interests and through which replies flowed to Government as well as requests for Government action in various areas where officialdom seemed to need prompting. The Chambers were high up on the government list of public bodies from which opinion and advice was sought - even if the matter under consideration was primarily a sectional planting, industrial, trading or even political-judicial one. The Chambers' views were thus sought both on general issues such as the Ilbert Bill and upon those which might have been seen as strictly sectional or technical, for they often had a wider perspective - as they had a wider membership - on which to draw than any other association. The Bengal Chamber in particular had quite a heavy load to carry of Government requests for opinions and advice, and since to this was superadded a constant burden of regular Chamber activities, there were repeated complaints of the inadequate time allowed by Government for the sounding and formulating of opinion.[3] (Government, of course, also secured advice by the appointment of members of the various Chambers to various public and official bodies, such as the Legislative Councils.) The regular work of the Chambers, the big five in particular, was always heavy. They had to service their membership, especially in the import and export spheres, not only with market information, general statistics, procedures for customs documentation, provision of weighing and measuring facilities, dealing with standardisation of weights and measures and with tares and allowances and the like, but also by offering arbitration services. In the course of time commercial education and training and examinations, promotional activities, voluntary price control arrangements and

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1. The first native Indian Chamber - that at Cocanada - was only founded in 1885. See M.V. Namjoshi and B.R. Sabade, Chambers of Commerce in India, 20.

2. Ibid., 20-22.

3. See, for example, Bengal C/Comm Report 1890-91, 53 ff. and Madras ibid. 1889-90, xxxv.

labour advisory services would be further services offered by the various Chambers,[1] especially as employers' associations such as that set up in Cawnpore in 1901[2] came into being after the turn of the century outside the old established fields such as planting.[3] The provision and maintenance of liaison with other Chambers in India and abroad and with other non-official organisations was a necessary extension of such services. Indeed as far back as 1885 the practice had been established of Indian Chambers sending delegates to the Congresses of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire.[4] In 1905 liaison work was further strengthened, this time among the Chambers in South Asia, with the holding of the first Conference of India and Ceylon Chambers of Commerce in Calcutta with the Bengal Chamber as host.[5] The proposal of the Bengal Chamber in 1906 to further strengthen institutional links with Britain by setting up an East India Committee in London officially to represent in Britain the viewpoint of India's mercantile and industrial sectors met with no success at the time - due principally to strong opposition from the Bombay Chamber - but came to fruition in another form when the London Chamber of Commerce set up its own East India Section in 1912.[6] With such activity, both local and all-India, the office work of the larger Chambers was very heavy and the correspondence vast, a fact clearly reflected in the lengthy annual reports summarising their activities, which ran at times to well over a thousand pages.[7]

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1. See Namjoshi and Sabade, ch. IV and Dehkney, ch. III.

2. Upper India C/Comm Report 1901, 17.

3. For some review of employers' associations in India see Dhekney, ch. IV.

4. The first four Congress were held in Britain in 1885, 1892, 1896 and 1900, the London Chamber organising them. The Fifth Congress took place in Montreal in 1903 and further Congresses were held in London in 1906 and 1912 and in Sydney in 1909. See London C/Comm Reports 1885-1912. Moreover, Indian Chambers were also represented at the International Congresses of Chambers of Commerce, such as at the Fifth Congress held at Boston in 1912.

5. Bengal C/Comm Reports 1904, 1905, Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 105. The 1905 Conference was probably motivated to some extent by the recent formation of a new Government Department of Commerce and Industry (see further discussion below). No further Conference was held till 1917.

6. Bombay C/Comm Report 1906, Madras and Bengal ibid. 1907. The new Section was brought into being, with C.C. McLeod as its first Chairman, because 'although the Indian mercantile community in London had been mixed up with China in one Section for a great many years , both countries were large enough to have Sections of their own'. See London C/Comm Report 1912, 100.

7. The Report of the Bengal Chamber for 1890-91 thus ran to nearly 1,400 pages and that of the Bombay Chamber for 1903 to nearly 1,100 pages. Madras's fall by 1907 to fifth place in commercial importance after Calcutta, Bombay, Karachi and Rangoon in that order (see StMMPr 1906-07, 170), is reflected in the modest size of its annual reports which, even as late as 1916 and 1917, were averaging a mere 300 pages. By contrast, the Report of the Upper India Chamber for 1910 was around 350 pages, and that of the Punjab Chamber in 1918 some two hundred more.

The local issues with which the European Chambers dealt fell into two categories: namely those of a regular general nature paralleled in any town which could support a Chamber, and those of a particular or occasional nature which were specific to the town concerned. Within the first category fell municipal and port affairs. Thus under the terms of the Calcutta Municipal Consolidation Act II of 1888, the Bombay Municipal Act III of that year, and the Madras City Municipal Act I of 1904, the Chambers in those cities were accorded the right to nominate representatives to the local municipal body concerned.[1] Similarly the Upper India Chamber advised the UP Lieutenant-Governor on nominations to the Cawnpore Municipal Board, whilst the Punjab Chamber early attempted to get its representatives onto the municipal committees of Delhi, Amritsar and Lahore and even of Rawalpindi and Ambala where some of its members were located.[2] The Chambers were likewise represented in many city improvement trusts when these were set up.[3] Since so many of their members were in some way involved with imports, exports and shipping, the Chambers were quick to claim places on the Port Trusts[4] from which to press for improved port facilities - their success was reflected in such measures as the incorporation of tea transit sheds in Calcutta's Kidderpore Docks project and the favour with which the Bombay Government was at last persuaded to look upon harbour development at Karachi.[5] (The disparity in importance between the Chambers and the Trades Associations is neatly reflected in their representation on the Calcutta Port Trust - five Bengal Chamber members against

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1. Choudhuri, 145-6, StMMPr 1889-90, 36 and ibid. 1904-05, 3, Madras C/Comm Report 1904, appendix JJ. In Calcutta, where European and mercantile interests were being swamped by the Hindu clique in the Council, Curzon had to interfere personally when the amending Municipal Bill introduced in 1898 failed to provide a satisfactory solution to the problem. See Curzon C. MSS.Eur.F.111/158, 208-9.

2. Upper India C/Comm Report 1904, 11, Punjab ibid. 1907, 5-6; 1909, 13, and 1910, 13, 18.

3. Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 109, Sulivan 130.

4. In Karachi, for example, the local Chamber elected two members to the Port Trust under the provisions of The Karachi Port Trust Act, 1886 (Bombay Act VI of 1886), increasing its representation to three under the relevant Amendment Act of 1902. The port's position amongst the leading sea-towns of India was due in great deal to its voluminous export trade in wheat and its Chamber, 'with the very keenest interest', watched irrigation work in the Punjab and Sind which was calculated to enhance the port's trade still further. See Feldman 55-94, The Cyclopedia of India, I, 245, B. Temple 103-18, and Sind Gazette 23.3.1910 reporting annual meeting of Karachi Chamber.

5. Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 75, H.Feldman, Karachi through a Hundred Years, 55-4. The Karachi Chamber had less success however in bringing about the introduction of a direct Eastern Mail Service to its port for which it had been consistently advocating since 1861 and pressing Government on many occasions to no avail. See Karachi C/Comm Report 1913, LXXXXV and 126.

the one of the CTA).[1]

As a splendid example of the second category of local but irregularly occuring issues may be noted the Rangoon Chamber's complaints about King Thibaw's grant of monopolies to non-British enterprises, contrary to his treaty with Britain, and his failure to check robbery and near anarchy in the countryside and that Chamber's plea in May 1885 for the Viceroy 'to interfere and put the Government of Upper Burma on a satisfactory footing by annexation or otherwise'. In this case, the Bengal Chamber offered sympathetic support, as did the London Chamber, which organised a deputation to wait on the Secretary of State Lord Randolph Churchill and rallied other Chambers in Britain to the cause, but the Chambers at Madras and Bombay by contrast adopted aloof attitudes in the matter.[2]

Just as some local issues tended to crop up in every region and confront all Chambers while others were peculiar to individual Chambers, so too with all-India problems: some elicited almost identical reactions from all Chambers, while others brought out divergent or isolated responses from them. Among the wider matters with which all Chambers were concerned[3] in one form or another were regulations relating to merchandise marks and to limited liability, the amalgamation of the presidency banks[4] and the abolition of currency circles,[5] the weight and incidence of income tax, customs and tariff duties, regulations covering safety and hours of work in factories, the quality of legal administration, decentralisation of financial administration, and government famine and plague measures.[6] Some matters, though general in form,

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1. Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 61, CTA Report 1892, 24.

2. Madras C/Comm Report 1885, Bombay ibid. 1884-85, Bengal ibid. 1884, London ibid. 1885. The influence of the Chambers of Commerce was imparted in the decision to annex Upper Burma. See A.T.Q.Stewart, The Pagoda War, 116: 'Dufferin was well aware that Churchill, with the backing of the chambers of commerce, was strongly in favour of annexation', and D.Woodman, The Making of Burma, 230-45, who notes: 'The chambers of commerce had had their way'. But the particularism of Bombay and Madras should also be noted - the Chambers were often but not always of one mind.

3. The Chambers' involvement in civil service and constitutional issues is discussed in chapters V and VI below.

4. The amalgamation, mooted in 1899, did not take place till 1920, see Sulivan 209-10.

5. India had been divided into Circles of Issue of currency notes, and a currency note was only freely convertible within its own Circle except by special Government permission. See Feldman, 17-19.

6. The famine in the Bombay Presidency in 1896 and in the Central Provinces in 1897 caused a calamitous drop in wheat exports, and the bubonic plague of those years in Bombay threatened the 'already semi-paralysed trade' of that city further. 'While the Plague continues to rage in Bombay so severely as it does at present, there is no doubt that Calcutta is threatened'. See Bombay C/Comm Report 1897, 57-9, and Bengal ibid. 1897-98, I, 11.

tended to affect only certain Chambers - countervailing duties on sugar[1] or mine regulations might here be instanced. Again while Chambers in some cases were responding to measures and proposals initiated by Government, in other cases they joined to press views on Government - as where the Bombay and Bengal Chambers suggested legislation to prevent Indian firms from using misleading European names and styles or campaigned for the establishment of an Imperial Customs Service for India.[2]

It is instructive to note how different was the response of the Chambers to the two most important and continuous commercial problems of the period - those of railway development and currency and exchange control.[3] In the former case all the Chambers were united in pressing for a more rapid development of the railway network,[4] complicated though this was by the mixed history of its construction in India: by private companies given a guaranteed return from the 1850's to 1869, by Government itself from 1870 to 1880, and thereafter by both,[5] and by a consequent variety in the form of management of the various lines, companies and Managing Agencies.[6] With the mushrooming of trade, commerce and industry at the end of the nineteenth century, new railway development tended to lag behind the requirements of the rapidly expanding business world. The railway expansion which was achieved owed much to the pressurings on Government by the Chambers of Commerce. Thus in 1883 and 1884 the Bengal

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1. Chamber pressure influenced Government to bring in a law in 1899 to impose countervailing import duties on sugar and other articles which received bounties from their country of origin. When that measure ceased to achieve its aims in the case of sugar, due to indirect bounties paid to the foreign sugar producers, further Chamber pressure from the UP, Bengal, Punjab and Madras especially was a factor in leading Government to raise the import duty on bounty-fed sugar beet in 1902. Countervailing duties on sugar imports were, however, abolished in respect of States belonging to the Brussels Sugar Convention, after that Convention in 1903 had abolished the bounty system in force. See StMMPr 1899-1900, 131; 1901-02, 205; 1903-04, 90, 114-5; Anstey 346, Madras C/Comm Report 1899, xiii, and 1902, vii, and P.P. 1907, LIX, 661-8, Return 337.

2. Madras C/Comm Report 1904, vii, 1909, xiv.

3. Sulivan, 128.

4. This held true notwithstanding differences about which new lines should have priority, and what gauge (broad or narrow) should be adopted. For a review of the latter issue see R.N. Kitchley, Gauge Policy on Indian Railways.

5. The proved usefulness of the railway in the Bengal famine of the late 1870's had been a major factor in the fresh encouragement Government gave to private railway enterprise from 1880. However the guarantee terms offered were less generous than previously.

6. Whilst Government exercised its purchase option in regard to the old guaranteed companies when their contracts ran out, it leased financially profitable lines back to private companies on management contracts and retained new construction and the operation of unprofitable lines itself.

Chamber gave the further growth of railways pride of place in its reports, while the Bombay Chamber made railway expansion a major theme in its address of welcome to the Viceroy-elect, Elgin in 1894: 'The subject to railway extension was ... one which the Chamber had never lost the opportunity of bringing prominently to the front'.[1] Elgin took the matter in hand and during his viceroyalty railway development was given a further vigorous push forward, some 3,500 miles of new line being opened, bringing the total mileage at the end of 1898 to 22,000.[2]

Though Curzon perhaps needed little prompting in his reform of railway administration, the Railway Commissioner whom the Secretary of State appointed in 1901, Thomas Robertson, was careful to enter into a round of consultations with the various Chambers of Commerce in 1902 and 1903, before submitting the recommendations which issued in the establishment of the Indian Railway Board in 1905, independent of the Public Works Department.[3] Three years later, in 1908,[4] the Committee on Indian Railway Finance and Administration for its part recommended an annual capital outlay on railways of 12.5 million pounds. Subsequent Government expenditure fell short of the recommendation and caused much grumbling[5] but the holding of a Railway Conference in Calcutta in January 1912 - it stressed the insufficiency of Government's capital programme for the railways - demonstrated Government's continued concern with railway expansion. By 1914 some 34,700 miles of railway were in use.[6]

Like the problem of railways, the currency and exchange question - a

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1. See Bombay C/Comm Report 1894, 243. In view of the custom of Viceroys arriving in India at Bombay and then proceeding immediately to the Seat of Government in Calcutta, the Chambers of these two towns had more opportunity than others of urging their viewpoint at the highest level in the course of the traditional addresses of welcome.

2. See B. Saigal, 'Lord Elgin II and the Indian Railways', Ind.Hist. Cong. Progs. 1951, 279-84.

3. See T. Robertson, Report on the Administration and Working of Indian Railways. (issued as P.P. 1903, /Cd.1713./, and Summary of the Administration of Indian Railways during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon of Kedleston, 28-36. The implementing Act concerned, Act IV of 1905, supplemented the Indian Railways Act IX of 1890, which had consolidated and amended railway law in India to that time.

4. By the start of 1908 Government had purchased all the major private enterprise railways in India, and though European companies concerned continued their connection, it was henceforth in a management capacity rather than as owners.

5. See page 216.

6. See J.N.Sahni, Indian Railways One Hundred Years 1853 to 1953, /17-24; Z. Ahmad, Indian Railways ch. I; A. Prasad, Indian Railways, ch. II; Anstey 130-5, 524; Bengal, Bombay and Madras C/Comm Reports 1902-1913; P.P. 1908, LXXV, /Cd.4111./ giving Finance and Administration Committee's Report, and India Office Public Works Dept. Papers File 440 of 1912, on the Railway Conference.

complicated one - was of much concern to the Chambers' membership and was given prominent attention, particularly from the 1890's when amid the publicity surrounding the International Monetary Conference held in Brussels in 1892 argument as to the currency standard best suited to India - silver or gold, or even bi-metallic - ran the length and breadth of the country.[1] The rapid and continuous fall in the value of silver against gold in the two decades from the early 1870's had tended to undermine the stability of India's financial system given the unlimited conversion of silver bullion into rupees allowed at the Calcutta and Bombay mints. From around 2s.0d. in the early eighteen seventies, the value of the rupee fell to only some 1s.3d. in 1893 and serious concern was felt in government and non-official circles. On the Herschell Indian Currency Committee's recommendation[2] Government closed the mints to silver coinage in 1893, reducing the rupee circulation, with the object of raising the exchange value of the rupee to 1s.4d. (even though its intrinsic value might be less). When this point was reached, as it was in 1898, gold coins were brought into circulation alongside the rupee and with the aim of substituting a gold for the silver standard in India. That attempt failed. But meanwhile, by carefully controlling the issue or withdrawal from circulation of rupees, Government managed to maintain the rupee's exchange value at around the 1s.4d. mark and thus stability was restored. The aim of introducing a bi-metallic or gold standard was however abandoned - a decision approved by the Royal Commission on Indian Finance and Currency under Austen Chamberlain in its report in 1914.[3]

The Chambers' membership along with the rest of the European business community in India was much concerned with the currency and exchange question, but the solution desired varied according to the business sector involved. Attitudes varied according to whether the country one was buying from or selling to - or competing with - was on the gold or silver standard. In the 1890's for example less than one fifth of India's seaborne foreign trade was with silver standard countries[4] - but those engaged in trade with such countries were naturally vociferous in their objections to any abandonment of India's

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1. The Madras C/Comm Report 1892, xx-xxii, notes the setting up of a European controlled Indian Currency Association to press Government into adopting a Gold Standard for India.

2. See P.P. 1893-94, LXV, [C.-7060]. The Committee was headed by Baron Herschell the Lord Chancellor.

3. P.P. 1914, XX, [Cd. 7236]. For brief reviews of the question see Anstey 409-16 and Sulivan 190-202.

4. P.P. 1899, XXXI, 11.

gold standard, but to their protests were added those of others who feared the silver country's competition in gold standard country markets. The tea industry in international competition with the silver standard country China and the quasi-silver standard country Japan felt that its profits were seriously threatened by the rise in value of the currency, and came out firmly against any adoption of a gold standard.[1] For that industry, with small imports, mainly of machinery, and large exports, the motive for remaining on a silver standard was clear, as it was for the coffee planting industry in competition with the silver or quasi-silver[2] standard countries of South and Central America. The cotton industry's reactions were less unified. Those producing for the local market in India were far less concerned about Government's currency policy than those engaged on the export side of the industry facing direct and indirect competition from the silver standard Far East. Within the Chambers of Commerce, the case was still more complex, owing to the variety of membership interests - ranging from commerce through transport to planting and industry - which came under the umbrella of the Chambers. If the rupee's value went up, those exporting clearly feared that their sales might drop whilst, conversely, those importing would obviously welcome the opportunity to buy at cheaper prices. Far less obvious was the attitude to be taken by insurance and shipping firms whose business depended on the well-being of other businesses, or again by the large Managing Agencies controlling various concerns whose interests might be in direct conflict. So, where the Bombay Chamber with its large cotton interest favoured the silver standard, the more diversified Bengal Chamber declined to give Government any guidance on the matter.[3] The Madras Chamber, more sure of its ground, came out in favour of establishing a gold standard, though unaccompanied by the use of gold currency.[4] What all the Chambers of Commerce, and the traders in the CTA, wanted was for the exchange value of the rupee to be firmly fixed, for the fluctuations, past and potential, had proved very disruptive to normal

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1. P.P. 1899, XXXI, 10, 22. Japan at the close of the nineteenth century had adopted a gold currency, but had fixed her exchange at the low rate ruling in silver standard countries. See UPASI letter in P.P. 1898, LXI, 461, [C.-8840].

2. Though Brazil nominally had a gold standard UPASI contended that its currency had fallen in value, and the country should therefore be considered as being on a par with silver standard countries. See P.P. ibid., 461.

3. P.P. 1898, LXI, 464, and ibid. 1899, XXXI, 322-3.

4. P.P. 1899, XXXI, 321. There had been a number of schemes put forward to this effect of which the most prominent were those of A.M. Lindsay and L.C. Probyn. See survey in P.P. 1898 LXI, 447-8.

business. A similar dislike of uncertainty caused a broad Chamber front to arise against a Government proposal in 1898 to reduce the amount of silver currency in the market by annual withdrawals; BIPA, for example, joining its voice to Chamber objections, alleged that there would be a serious rise in interest rates and alarm and serious losses would be incurred in local business carried on mainly on a borrowed capital or credit basis.[1]

The Chambers of Commerce embraced planting and industrial affairs within their scope. This arose not only because Government chanelled requests for advice in these fields through the Chambers, but because, being situated at the main ports as the large Chambers were, many of their members were involved as agents or principals in the import or export business which such large scale planting and industry required. The connection was further strengthened through the Managing Agency functions exercised by the leading members of the most important Chambers - firms such as Begg, Dunlop & Co. for example, which often established associated firms elsewhere in India, in this case Begg, Sutherland & Co. at Cawnpore,[2] the more easily to watch over their widespread interests. As the Bengal Chamber has explained:[3] 'A managing agency may be briefly described as an arrangement whereby a firm or company (the managing agents) has a long-term agreement with a managed company whereby the managing agents will (under the direction and general control of the directors of the managed company) manage all aspects of the managed company's business'. Such agreements usually laid down that the Managing Agency would provide staff and office accommodation for the managed company - giving it the benefit not only of its own wide experience and administrative talent, but also of staff economies - and in return would be remunerated by a commission on the managed company's profits.[4] The system was a particularly convenient one for India where much of the early development capital came from companies registered in Britain.[5]

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1. P.P. 1899, XXXI, 321-7.

2. See Cawnpore: A Gazetteer, 81-2.

3. Bengal Chamber of Commerce Papers, Note 14.4.1951 on the organisation of UK interests in India and Pakistan, in file 'Formation of the Central Constitutional Committee & Regional Committees. India Burma Association'.

4. In earlier years, commission was frequently based on turnover.

5. For discussion on the Managing Agency system at work and on capital investment in India see National Council of Applied Economic Research New Delhi, The Managing Agency System; G. Tyson, Managing Agency; D.H. Buchanan, The Development of Capitalistic Enterprise in India; and Bagchi; Anstey; and Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 97-101. Anstey 501-5 also provides a review of the legal position of Managing Agents and Tyson's Bengal Chamber history 98-9 some further bibliography on the Managing Agency system.

Furthermore, some European planting and industrial organisations - such as the ITA, IJMA and the IMA - were directly administered by or actually affiliated to a Chamber. These affiliated bodies themselves acted as subordinate foci for further clusters of firms and associations connected with the supply or marketing aspects of their industry, such as cotton ginning or jute baling, though many such firms and associations were themselves in direct membership of the Chamber. The Bengal Chamber, the outstanding example, thus encompassed associations representing the supply and marketing sides of the tea and jute industries, whilst, by extension, its engineering and iron traders' association provided both services and supplies to these as well as to the mining and construction industries. Additionally a variety of commerce-centred associations fell under the aegis of the Chambers, such as those dealing with the wine, spirit and beer trade, or, more notably, with the import trade in general or with exports such as wheat and seeds. Planting, industry, trade and commerce all needed insurance, and the import and export worlds shipping space too, so that associations catering for insurance and shipping also fell under the Chambers' wing.[1]

For the same reason, banks were important members of the Chambers and themselves showed considerable business initiative. National and Grindlays thus had opened branches in Calcutta and Bombay by the 1860's, in Madras in the 1870's, at Karachi, Delhi and Rangoon in the 1880's and at Cawnpore in the 1890's.[2] The rapid growth of maritime imports and exports and in the coastal passenger and mail carrying services meant again that shipping affairs were a necessary concomitant of much business activity, which explains why the Bengal Chamber set up shipping as well as railway, inland transport, finance, and other sub-committees, and how the Mackinnon, Mackenzie firm, for example, came to rank with the leading concerns in the Bengal Chamber.[3] Though much investment came from abroad, there were important bill and stock-broking firms, such as Calcutta's Siddons and Gough, which found it worthwhile to be within the camaraderie of a Chamber, as too did Thomas Cook the travel agents.[4] The Chambers' interest spectrum was extraordinarily wide.

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1. See Thacker's 1909, Calcutta section 46-7, Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 94.

2. G. Tyson, 100 Years of Banking in Asia and Africa, appendix D.

3. Thacker's 1909, Calcutta section 46, G. Blake, B.I. Centenary 1856-1956, 167. From 1890 to 1950 this famous shipping concern provided the Bengal Chamber with its annual President on twenty occasions. See Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 189-91.

4. See Thacker's 1907, 814,815,871. Outside the Chambers, of course, joint European-Indian membershipped Stock Exchange and Brokers' Associations were in being by the early twentieth century, see Anstey, 111-12.

Contacts with officialdom were many, and the Chambers in India therefore warmly welcomed the setting up of a separate Department of Commerce and Industry by Government in 1905 - a belated recognition of the enormous growth of the country in those fields and of non-official enterprise - providing as it did for closer ties with officialdom. The Bombay Chamber felt especially honoured in that its ex-Secretary F. Nöel-Paton became first Director-General of Commercial Intelligence. The Madras Chamber was disgruntled however when only two Commercial Intelligence Directors were proposed for the Department after the move of the Capital to Delhi in 1912 - one for the Eastern and another for the Western Circle - since the Southern Presidency was thus left, so to speak, out in the cold. On the other hand whilst the main headquarters of the Department were transferred to Simla, the Commercial Intelligence Department remained in Calcutta,[1] largely because of pressure from the Bengal Chamber.

In their internal administrative structure and their relations with the various sectors of the commercial world the larger Chambers each adopted the course which seemed most apt to their own particular case. Thus whilst the Bombay Chamber followed Calcutta in providing office facilities to other organisations in the city, such as the local Underwriters' Association,[2] Madras took a different path and its European Chamber affiliated to it five small mofussil Chambers, namely those of Cocanada, Calicut, Cochin, Coimbatore and Tuticorin.[3] The Punjab Chamber, a late-comer founded in Delhi in December 1905,[4] was quick to set up local branch committees in Delhi, Lahore, Amritsar and other principal trade centres in the Punjab[5] to which its relationship was akin to that of Madras with its affiliates. As might have been expected, however, the Bengal Chamber, the largest and most important Chamber of all,

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1. Bombay C/Comm Report 1905, Madras ibid. 1912, Bengal ibid. 1912. A separate provincial Industries Department set up in Madras in 1906 under A. Chatterton(a professor of engineering), had been abolished by the Indian Government but then allowed to function again by 1914. By that time (non-department) appointments of Directors of Industry in Bengal and the United and Central Provinces were in existence. See Anstey 211-12.

2. Sulivan, 279.

3. See A.A. Hayles, Madras Chamber of Commerce Centenary Handbook 1836-1936, 24.

4. See Punjab C/Comm Report 1906, xxxvi. A Delhi Chamber formed c.1894 (see Bombay C/Comm Report 1894, 248) appeared to have meanwhile faded out. The Calcutta/Bengal, and the Bombay and Madras Chambers had been founded in the 1830's, and those at Karachi and Rangoon in the late 1850's, whilst the Upper India Chamber at Cawnpore had been established in 1888.

5. Punjab C/Comm Report 1911, i, details five local committees in existence.

had more affiliates or quasi-affiliates than any other Chamber in India and its relationship to them had much of a Managing Agency look about it.[1]

The very wide scope of the service and pressure-group activities of the Chambers of Commerce which has here been reviewed implied the presence of an effective leadership, an effective office staff and organisation, and the support of a growing membership. This last is readily observable: the Bengal Chamber grew in membership from 77 in 1883 to 192 in 1913, the Bombay Chamber over much the same period from 52 to 116, Karachi from 12 to 50 and Rangoon from 19 to 61 - and the other lesser Chambers recorded similar advances, the Upper India Chamber, for example, increasing from 22 to 60 between 1888 and 1913. Growth in membership lists was matched by the general enlargement of office accommodation whether this was owned - as were the Bengal Chamber's offices in the Royal Exchange and those of the Karachi Chamber in Wood Street, or rented as in Bombay, Madras and Rangoon.[2] Much was obviously owed to senior staff, especially to their Secretaries, many of whom served for considerable periods, as did H.W.I. Wood from 1854 to 1884 or H.M. Haywood from 1907 to 1927 in Calcutta, John Marshall for fourteen years to 1898 in Bombay, or W.B. Wishart and C.H. Chetham for fifteen and thirteen year terms in Cawnpore and Karachi to 1904 and 1908. In Madras, moreover, the father and son combination of (Sir) C. and A.E. Lawson served the Chamber as Secretaries from 1862 to 1916.[3] (Their reign, though, emphasised the danger of a long-time Secretary resting on his laurels. Some of the somnolescence of the Chamber and its membership decline from 34 in 1885 to 30 in 1913 - the complete reverse of the general pattern of the European Chambers - must be placed at their door.) Still more depended, however, upon the calibre of the policy making committees and the lead given by those who as Chairmen or Presidents of Chambers became the acknowledged leaders of the European non-official commercial community in their own region and, in the case of the Presidents of the Bengal Chamber, in effect of that community in the country as a whole. Men such as Rangoon's H.C. Wilson,[4] Cawnpore's W.E. Cooper and A. McRobert,

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1. Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 60.

2. The Bombay Chamber occupied premises at Grahams' Buildings for fifty years from 1884, Madras had a similar long tenancy from 1869-1920 at 6 First Line Beach, whilst the Rangoon Chamber (it had restyled itself as the Burma Chamber in 1911) twice moved to new offices in the forty years from the 1880's.

3. See Chamber histories by Tyson, Sulivan and Feldman, and centenary handbook and golden jubilee history of the Madras and Upper India Chambers.

4. Agent of the Hong-Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation.

Madras's George Arbuthnot, Karachi's outstanding figure Montagu de Pomeroy Webb[1] and Bombay's Frank Forbes Adam[2] not only distinguished themselves in their Chambers[3] but in the wider public field as well. Bengal's James L. Mackay (the later Lord Inchcape) was perhaps the most outstanding example - he headed the 1907-8 government enquiry committee on Indian railway finance and administration, as too the 1912 Railway Conference in Calcutta. Numbers of such men served on the local - and some on the imperial - Legislative Councils. Nor, despite the enlarged room which had to be made for Indian names in the regular honours lists,[4] did the leaders of the non-official Europeans lack public acknowledgement in knighthoods and other awards of the value of their services and the quality of their leadership.

But the enterprise of such men in and out of the Chambers, and of the non-official European community more generally, was also testified to by the changed and changing face of India. The thirty or forty years before the First World War had seen the telephone, introduced in the 1880's, become a commonplace, electricity and tramway systems were no longer gaped at in wonder, whilst even in the mofussil, smiles might have been raised by the memory of that period around the start of the new century when the 'Locomobile' steam car - the first motor car brought into India - fitted up with its paraffin burner and costing a ½ anna a mile to run, had puffed away, boasting among its merits 'climbs any hill'[5] - a challenging boast that could almost have served as the Community's motto.

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1. Webb, who eventually headed the Karachi office of the merchant, agency and banking firm of Forbes, Forbes, Campbell & Co. and was an author on financial and economic subjects, was elected Chairman of the Karachi Chamber no less than seventeen times. See Feldman, 83, 109.

2. Partner in W.A. Graham & Co., merchants and shipping agents.

3. Arbuthnot's name, though, was probably tarnished somewhat when his famous family firm crashed heavily in 1906.

4. 'I have done my best to find Natives, as I know her Majesty desires this to be done. Otherwise I might have been inclined to substitute some European names'. Elgin to Fowler 17.4.1895, Elgin P. MSS. Eur. F. 84/13, 57.

5. See advertisement in Indians Planters' Gazette 3.1.1903.

CHAPTER V

POLITICS TO THE FORE

At the opening of the twentieth century and for several years thereafter the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association - in marked contrast to the vitality exhibited by the missionary bodies - showed scarcely any sign of life, at most the faintest, nigh imperceptible breath, and that drawn only at the longest intervals. By 1904 its life-blood membership had drained away to no more than 54 local, resident members and 108 in all other categories.[1] In 1906 the drain continued, and 'owing to the number of retirements having exceeded new accessions' which reduced the number of resident members to a mere 50, the Association was forced to take temporary bank overdrafts and even to dip into the capital accumulated in Ilbert Bill days to make good the shortfall which subscriptions showed when set against current needs and expenditure. 'In the hope of enlisting fresh subscribers' the Defence Association decided to issue 'a special appeal to the European community throughout the country ... pointing out the important work done by the Association for the whole community' - the appeal to go out after the AGM on 6 May 1907.[2]

The appeal, despatched on 8 June 1907, called attention to the Association's 'useful and important work' for India's non-official Europeans, done and still a-doing, and invited addressees to join the Association themselves and to induce others to do so.[3] More publicity conscious than for many years past, the Association also circulated its members on 20 September about the Bloomfield case[4] and in October 1907

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1. EAIDA Report, 1904, 44-50. Its two Life Resident members that year were living in England. Such Britain-based life members of this category - there were also Life Associate members, two for example in 1907 - were for all practical purposes foreign members of the Association, and resident members totals in this chapter exclude such 'life residents' abroad who were negligible in number.

2. Report ibid., 1905, 3-4; 1906, 3, 42-3, 47.

3. Ibid., 1907, 16.

4. R. Bloomfield a Champaran indigo planter and zamindar who had refused officially to register the name of certain ryots who claimed some holdings in his zamindari had been mobbed and virtually beaten to death.

sent its views on Government plans for Council reform to various European commercial organisations.[1] Nevertheless, despite these moves, at the year's end there were again only 54 resident members, 19 non-resident members, 32 associate, 5 foreign and 3 life members - or a miserable 113 all told.[2] However, when in mid-December the Darjeeling Planters' Association responded to the EAIDA's October letter by urging the Defence Association to take steps to strengthen itself, by wider publicity among the very many Europeans in India who did not even know of its existence, and by lowering its subscriptions, the EAIDA Council myopically replied in January 1908 by denying any lack of publicity[3] and rejecting the idea of reduced rates as financially unsound: 'There would therefore seem to be no reason why the rates of subscriptions ... should be altered, especially seeing that the funds of the Association are now barely sufficient for its support, and that it is extremely doubtful whether reduced subscriptions would necessarily induce a largely increased membership'.[4] The fact that, fortuitously perhaps,[5] membership figures improved in 1908 from 113 to 236,[6] only confirmed the EAIDA hierarchy in its financial caution and smug self-satisfaction.

The Defence Association had, in fact, turned down two golden opportunities in 1908-9. The President of the

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1. EAIDA Report 1906, 5 and 1907, 5-6, 18-23. The EAIDA circularised 9 Chambers of Commerce, 4 Trades Associations and 12 tea, jute and indigo associations, requesting comment.

2. Ibid., 1907, 31-5.

3. Such publicity, as it noted, had consisted of annual reports sent to members and the Press and distributed more widely within the community at intervals, and 'publishing in the principal newspapers all important letters' from the Association.

4. EAIDA Report 1907, 25-6. Resident members still paid a yearly subscription of Rs. 24 and Non-Residents Rs. 20. Associate members at the cheaper yearly rate of Rs. 6 had of course no voting rights.

5. The Association's 1908 Report emphasised the 'special mention' due to its Honorary Treasurer R.L. Williamson for his part in improving recruitment to the Association - resident members had increased from 54 to 145 - but the flow of new members may in part have reflected European selfconsciousness and unity caused by an extremist murder outrage at Muzaffarpur in April of that year.

6. EAIDA Report 1908, 37-44.

Darjeeling Planters' Association, it had been suggested, might join the EAIDA Council, supplementing the planter and zamindar representation provided by George Hennessey of Malda, the implied quid pro quo being some further review of subscription rates. (The issue here was whether such rates, about which the Darjeeling and other North Indian planters felt so strongly, might safely be reduced on the hypothesis that Darjeeling would bring in many new members.)[1] The Association's welcome to the idea of a tea planters' representative on Council encouraged Darjeeling in July 1908 to approach the Dooars Planters' Association for its aid. That body in its turn agreed to 'accord all possible support' to Darjeeling in canvassing for members for the EAIDA, and a vigorous campaign was opened among its five sub-district branches.[2] The Assam Valley branch of the Indian Tea Association reacted no less warmly to the approach of Darjeeling - doubtless on the assumption, like the Dooars Planters, of some reduction in EAIDA subscription rates.

At the end of July a joint planting delegation consisting of the President and Chairmen of the Darjeeling, Dooars and Assam Valley Associations, in the persons of H.R. Irwin, W. Alston and W. Skinner, met the EAIDA Council at Calcutta and proposed a change in EAIDA rules to allow 'a reduced subscription of Rs. 3 half-yearly for non-resident members', and offering in return the prospect of many new members - by March 1909 the Dooars Association for example had listed some 118 new members in prospect for the Defence Association.[3] But when the Dooars body made its proposal it was met in reply with the news that at a Defence Association council meeting held on 29 March it had been considered that it would be impossible to mobilise the quorum of resident members required to vote at two successive meetings to change the Association's rules, that in any case it was unlikely that enough new members would be forthcoming to compensate financially for a lowering of the subscription, and that therefore

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1. EAIDA Report 1908, 32-3.
2. Dooars Planters' Association Report 1908, 123.
3. Ibid., 1908, 224; 1909, 67; EAIDA Report 1909, 48.

they should 'abandon further consideration of the subject for the present'.[1] It was hardly surprising that A.W.C. Chaplin, the new Dooars Planters' Chairman, thereupon turned down the offer of a seat on the EAIDA Council, a move already made by Skinner for the Assam Valley, while Irwin the moving spirit behind the whole scheme, though no longer Darjeeling President, withdrew his membership.[2] When in August 1909 a renewed call was made by the Dooars, Darjeeling and Assam Planters' Associations to the EAIDA to adhere to the original proposal for a reduction in the annual subscription such as would permit and encourage a rapid and far-reaching growth in Ordinary membership, Council in September returned another blank refusal.[3] In a subsequent unfruitful correspondence the planters viewed the Council's stance as most unsatisfactory and were quite blunt in pointing out their impression that Council had gone back on its word.[4] Membership which had spurted in 1908 to 236 accordingly ceased to grow, and from 1909 had begun to turn down, the total in 1911 standing at 222, with 138 of these being resident members.[5]

In 1911 surely it must have seemed that the Defence Association as an active, effective instrument was beyond hope. Yet within two years membership was up to some 1,400, within three to approaching the 3,000 mark - the Association was once again a powerful body capable of commanding attention to its views: the days of the Ilbert Bill seemed to have returned. How had so dramatic a change occurred, what had caused it? In part revival must be attributed to structural changes within the Defence Association, to a renewal of dynamic leadership. But in part, and much more significantly, the change was a response to challenge. The key perhaps lies in the word Defence in the Association's title. Events outside the Association dictated whether it should stagnate or be galvanised into new life.

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1. Dooars ... Report 1909, 78-80, 234.
2. EAIDA Report 1909, 38-43.
3. Ibid., 43-47.
4. Ibid., 48.
5. EAIDA Reports 1909-1911.

The first fourteen years of the twentieth century were generally prosperous ones. European business in India was dynamic and expanding (except notably for indigo); there were few community problems which required united action from the non-official Europeans as a whole and which could not be taken care of by specialist bodies like the Indian Tea Association or the IJMA, or by the rather wider, but still commercially oriented Chambers of Commerce or the Trades Associations.

For the Defence Association, therefore, there was only a very limited role available. It could grumble intermittently to Government about Calcutta Police Court Delays, or pick up other local or temporary issues such as the renewed question in 1904 of the Burma Chief Court chief judgeship,[1] Bills on Local Self-Government in Bengal or on the preservation of game and fish, or with the domiciled and Eurasian community protest against the Government proposal to classify members of those communities working as sailors on vessels outward bound from India as lascars rather than as British sailors. But none of these were very lively issues, and even in appealing against the injustice done to a European British subject by his being bound over to keep the peace by a native magistrate, the Association can have set few nerves jangling. 'Our attitude is one of vigilant watchfulness' the President W. Garth, a barrister, pronounced at the March 1905 AGM - but it was a very placid sea he scanned.[2]

In 1905 a storm did blow, that between Curzon and Kitchener over the constitutional position of the Commander-in-Chief and the Military Member - or the ambitions of Curzon and Kitchener themselves -, but it was one which involved the non-official community only as spectators.[3] Interestingly, when Curzon's resignation was accepted[4] the Defence Association

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1. See page 106.

2. EAIDA Report 1904, 3-7, 51-2.

3. For a detailed review of this dispute see Ronaldshay, II, chs. XXVII, XXIX and D. Dilks, Curzon in India, II. S.P. Cohen, 'Issue, Role and Personality: The Kitchener-Curzon Dispute', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 1968, X, No. 3, analyses the question from a case study aspect.

4. He was followed as Viceroy by the Earl of Minto who assumed office in November 1905.

and the commercial world of the non-official European in general, overlooking the Viceroy's past 'interference' in court cases involving Europeans and Natives, which in their minds would have been better left alone, chose to express their gratitude to him 'for the constant and successful endeavours he had made to promote the interests of commerce and industry during his term of office' - the Madras Chamber's words - and to demonstrate a deep swell of sympathy for him and regret at his going.[1] But brighter weather returned with the visit of the Prince of Wales,[2] light airs sending Memsahibs everywhere scurrying to their dressmakers.

There was one issue of real significance, of course, the Partition of Bengal - put into effect on 16 October 1905,[3] but the excitement which that produced was within the Bengali community rather than the non-official European. To the Defence Association - or rather to its members and lawyers from the area affected - the main concern seemed to be with 'the risk attaching ... [to] a possible future interference with the jurisdiction of the [Calcutta] High Court'.[4]

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1. See 1905 Reports of Defence Association, Bengal, Bombay, Madras and Upper India Chambers, CTA and UPASI. The Upper India Chamber, stressing how Curzon's administration had been breaking down the barriers of official bureaucracy and making officials 'useful instruments' for promoting and developing the country's trade and industry instead of acting as progress-retarding brakes thereon as formerly, noted thirteen principal works and reforms carried out during Curzon's rule. Apart from such general works as 'educational reforms' and 'the renewal and conservation of India's ancient Monuments and Buildings' the commercial world gratefully recalled, for example, 'the establishment of a Department of Commerce and Industry ... the extension of canals ... the prosecution of a vigorous policy of Railway extension ... the contribution of a large sum of money ... to the different Provincial Governments for the extension of Agricultural knowledge and research, and the establishment of Agricultural Colleges', as also 'the introduction of a gold standard and currency reform'. Upper India C/Comm Report 1905, ii.

2. The Prince and his wife toured India from November 1905 to March 1906.

3. The Partition scheme created a new Lieutenant-Governorship of Eastern Bengal and Assam by a merger of the existing Chief Commissionership of Assam with the Chittagong, Dacca and Rajshahi Divisions of Bengal (excluding Darjeeling district), the district of Maldah and the State of Hill Tipperah. For Government papers and background detail see P.P. 1905, LVIII, [Cd. 2658.], ibid., 1906, LXXXI, [Cd. 2746.] and B.L.Grover, A documentary study of British policy towards Indian nationalism 1885-1909, ch.5.

4. EAIDA Report 1905, 9.

[Cd. 2658.], ibid., 1906, LXXXI, [Cd. 2746.] and B.L.Grover, A documentary study of British policy towards Indian nationalism 1885-1909, ch.5.

Reassured on this point by Government, the British dominated European bodies most intimately concerned either found nothing to object to in the Partition - the stance of the EAIDA, the Bengal Chamber and the CTA -, or as tea interest views showed kept an open mind on the question or positively welcomed the raising of the status of the Chief Commissionership of Assam to that of a full-fledged Province. To other European bodies outside the North East the issue naturally was of theoretical, rather than direct, interest and was treated with acquiescent indifference.[1] As for the handful of British radicals who sympathised with Bengali protest - men like the retired official Sir Henry Cotton who proposed a territorial rearrangement less opposed to Hindu sentiment[2] - their voices went unheeded. (When in 1911 Partition was undone not all of them would approve the changes then effected.)

The main positive action of the EAIDA remained however the pursuit of cases of 'injustice' to individual Europeans. One such was provided in 1905 by A.C. Rolt who, though acquitted following prosecution on a charge of bribery, had nevertheless been dismissed from his well-paid job under the Court of Wards.[3] Others in 1906 and 1907 were more dramatic - the assault by Indian labourers upon the labour supply agent T.H. Casey, the murder of the tea planter R. Goss, presumed to be at the hands of his coolies,[4] and the severe assault upon the indigo planter and zamindar Bloomfield.[5] And more generally the Association's lawyers were kept busy reviewing possible encroachments upon the special privileges enjoyed by Europeans in respect of communal jurisdiction.[6] The Association also commented upon the revival in 1908 of proposals for separating the Judicial from the Executive Branch

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1. See 1905 Reports of EAIDA, Bengal and Bombay Chambers, CTA and ITA, and 1905-06 Report of ITA(L).
2. See Friend of India, 29.3.1906.
3. EAIDA Report 1905, 6, 18-23.
4. Ibid. 1906, 4-5, 35-38a.
5. See page 243.
6. EAIDA Report 1906, 5-6.

of the Civil Service,[1] gave its usual rather tepid support to the Eurasian Association in the matter of the European Education Code, and offered its opinion to Government on the liquor question, though narrowing the issue down to its crime inducing aspects only.[2]

In these years the EAIDA had clearly interpreted its defensive role in very narrow terms. Yet there were movements stirring in India which increasingly seemed to demand a much more positive response. At the turn of the century the Indian National Congress appeared to have lost its way. The fillip given to Congress by the introduction of Legislative Council reforms in 1892 which might be taken as a response to its campaigning had died away. In the later 1890's delegate members at the annual sessions markedly declined. Congress had 'lost its initial vitality' and between 1898 and 1902 was largely preoccupied with internal constitutional problems.[3] Curzon however fed it with a series of issues - control of the Calcutta Municipality, the structure of the Universities, above all the proposals for the partition of Bengal[4] - all of which restored vigour to Indian politics, as the Swadeshi movement revealed. The EAIDA noted that 'under the pretence' of fostering indigenous industry, 'political agitation had raised a strong and widespread feeling against foreigners'. But the issue was a particular Bengali one, and by no means enjoyed universal support within Congress. The Defence Association could take comfort by

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1. 'Without disapproving of such separation at its proper stage' it 'deprecated it at any premature period in the official careers of Indian Civilians', and retained the same viewpoint in 1913 when Government revived the proposal, arguing that separation was impracticable 'both on financial and on administrative grounds'. EAIDA Report 1908, 4, European Association Report 1913, 18.

2. EAIDA Report 1909, 4-5, 31-37.

3. Argov, 47, 80, 83, Besant, How India wrought for freedom, 141-291.

4. See Besant ibid. 415-18, Argov 98, Choudhuri 171-2, 182-3. The municipality scheme had drastically reduced non-official Indian strength in the local Corporation, whilst the University reorganisation measures made it more difficult for Indians to enter due to higher fees and higher examination standards.

1906 therefore, since: 'the agitation, in its objectionable aspect, may be said to have died down'.[1]

That hope was soon to be belied by a steady growth in 'native unrest'. Congress was not 'tottering to its fall' as Curzon had supposed,[2] though it was to be disrupted by factional rivalries and disagreement over tactics between moderates and extremists. For the latter in particular the Abyssinian victory over the Italians at Aduwa in 1896, and of the Japanese over the Russians in 1904-05 had reinforced the lessons of the Boer War and of the struggle in Ireland for Home Rule, that Asians were not necessarily inferior to Europeans and that even Britain was not invincible.[3] The failure of constitutional agitation since the reforms of 1892 to secure any further advance, and the contempt with which Curzon brushed aside their objections - Partition was not an isolated 'deliberate measure aimed to break up their national unity', but rather the climax of a whole series of measures[4] - reinforced extremist views that more radical measures were needed. So, too, did the visit of a Congress delegation to Britain in 1905 which was to put India's needs and views before the politicians and the electorate, for the delegation was attacked in Press and meeting and those whom it had supported were rejected at the polls. To the Punjab delegate Lajpat Rai his experience in Britain bred conviction that Congress was wasting its time by continuing to look to the British Government or to British public opinion for support as it had done so constantly in the past. Henceforth India's campaign for political advancement had to be fought out singlehanded with the Government of India and on India's home ground. Such a campaign must be not one of words alone but of militant action.[5] Curzon's every action seemed designed to reinforce such feelings - his 1903 Official Secrets

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1. EAIDA Report 1905, 9.
2. Curzon to Secretary of State Hamilton 18.11.1900, Curzon C. MSS.Eur.F.111/159, 337.
3. V. Chirol, Indian Unrest, ix, 3.
4. Argov, 103-4, 109.
5. Ibid., 105-8.

Act - 'the Gagging Act' as the 1905 Congress called it,[1] his Calcutta University Convocation address in February 1905 with its aspersions on Indians' scant regard for the truth,[2] and finally Partition - let loose a violent wave of protest and the campaigns of Boycott and Swadeshi.

The December 1906 Congress at Calcutta attracted 1,663 delegates, the largest Congress assemblage - other than that of 1889 over which the great Bradlaugh had presided[3] - since its foundation, and it proceeded to carry a resolution calling not for piecemeal reforms but for Swaraj (Self-Government) for the Indian people in the form of 'Colonial Self-Government'.[4] However the ambiguity in the term Swaraj and bitter differences between the moderates and extremists and between the leaders from Bombay and Bengal over the terms of the boycott and Swadeshi policy resolutions to be adopted, divided and polarised Congress at the very moment when India's sense of grievance had brought it to new heights. In 1907 at the Surat session a split followed which drove the extremist wing out of Congress altogether for a decade.[5]

Expulsion did not end militancy, however, and in Bengal violence increasingly marked the politics of the region. To this regional extremism was added that of the Punjab where proposed increases in canal water rates and a new colonization measure which affected management and inheritance of canal colony land had caused serious unrest in an area already disturbed by an outbreak of plague. The sentence of imprisonment passed in Lahore in February 1907, upon two native editors who had described a European officer's accidental shooting of an Indian as murder, sparked off further widespread native agitation. A particularly notorious public mass meeting at Rawalpindi at the end of April had then lead to the deportation

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1. Besant, How India... 415.
2. See Proceedings of a Public Meeting held at the Calcutta Town Hall on the 10th March 1905, 'A protest against Lord Curzon's Last Convocation Address and General Administration'. How India...
3. Besant, /441. Attendance, with visitors, was estimated at 20,000.
4. Ibid., 455, 461.
5. Argov, 119-134.

early in May of Lajpat Rai, together with Ajit Singh who had chaired the meeting in question.[1] The violent scenes at Surat, where the Congress had split up in total disorder, merely set the seal upon a year in which unrest had acquired a new dimension.

The response of the non-official European community was increasingly sharp. At its annual general meeting in May 1907 the Defence Association's Vice President, the attorney W.J. Simmons, who took the chair,[2] had made the point that 'there never was a time when such an Association as yours was more necessary than it is today', while his fellow lawyer W. Garth, President from 1904 to 1906, commenting upon political extremism in Eastern Bengal, now spreading to other parts, reinforced his view: 'no one could have the slightest doubt that the unrest ... had ... increased enormously'.[3] Accordingly the Defence Association had proceeded towards the end of May to address the Governments of India, of Bengal and of Eastern Bengal and Assam upon the subject of 'the prevailing unrest'.[4] This was a more vigorous response than usual for the Defence Association, but typically they found that the faster moving Bengal Chamber, its attention drawn to the unrest in Eastern Bengal and Assam by the Chambers of Chittagong and Narayanganj, had preceded it in such representations by about a week. The upshot was, as on other occasions, that Government sent the Defence Association in return a copy of its reply to the Bengal Chamber, in which, noting the disturbances in the Tippera, Mymensingh and Pabna districts it pointed out the 'most strenuous

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1. Argov, 127-9.

2. The 1906/7 President H.W.S. Sparkes, senior partner of Orr, Dignam the solicitors, had resigned office on going home.

3. EAIDA Report 1906, 47-53 and Friend of India, 9.5.1907.

4. Though some alleviation in the situation was effected in the Punjab by Minto's veto of that province's Colonization Bill (see Minto to Morley 29.5.1907, Morley C. MSS.Eur.D.573/11, 119), the EAIDA letter to the Indian Government noted that public peace had 'not yet been restored in all parts of the country' and with the state of affairs thus 'very unsatisfactory' trusted 'that the measures contemplated by the Government for the restoration of public peace and personal freedom [might] not be delayed' to an extent which would make illegal license 'more and more difficult to repress'. Letter dated 21 May 1907.

measures' which Government had taken to suppress such disturbances and prevent their recurrence.[1] (Tea interests however noted with some relief that 'so far as the tea districts themselves are concerned, they have been freer from disturbances than many other parts. The agitator is too busy, apparently, in Bengal proper, to trouble himself about the Brahmaputra and Surmah Valleys'.)[2] The Government's actions did not restore order, however. Later in 1907 the EAIDA made 'two strong representations' to the Railway Board at Simla about the growing frequency and gravity of outrages against (European) passengers on the railways, which had taken the form of 'serious robberies' and even of 'criminal violence'. But on 6 December came the attempt to derail the train on which Sir Andrew Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was travelling, and on the 23rd the shooting on the platform of Goalundo station of B.C. Allen, a former Dacca District Magistrate.[3] As Simmons had to admit at the Defence Association's annual meeting on 30 March 1908 unrest 'had entered a new stage', marked by 'Mafia methods'.[4]

It was against this background that the attempts of the Planter Associations to re-invigorate and broaden the Defence Association were made.[5] When they failed, other organisations took over the role which the EAIDA had refused to assume, that of leading the non-official community's reaction to Indian extremism. The first to do so was the Behar Planters' Association (the BPA) - the word Indigo had now been deleted from its title. The European indigo planters had been having a bad time of it[6] since the German exploitation of an artificial blue dye. From 1905 under a

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1. EAIDA Report 1907, 3, 4, 13-15, Bengal C/Comm Report 1907, II, 13-16.

2. ITA(L) Report 1907-08, 131.

3. EAIDA Report 1907, 7, 23, 24, and Englishman (weekly) 12, 26.12.1907.

4. Report ibid. 1907, 37-40 giving AGM proceedings.

5. There was an urgent need in their opinion for 'some very strongly constituted body'. Report ibid., 25.

6. See Chapter IV above.

new General Secretary, T.R. Filgate,[1] though reluctant to impose an indigo cess, they were still struggling to find some botanical break-through to beat their competitor, helped by Government assistance with their research. (There was some hope that imported Java-Natal seed might prove the key which would unlock the door.)[2] But planters in Behar were victims not only of a technical revolution - they were also subject to political violence. It was on their very doorstep, at the entrance of the Muzaffarpur Station Club - still the setting of many cheerful social occasions - that on 30 April 1908 Mrs Kennedy and her daughter were shot down by two young Bengali terrorists Khudiram Bose and Dinesh Chundra Roy who had been laying in wait for D.H. Kingsford,[3] the newly appointed Sessions Judge of Muzaffarpur. At a specially convened general meeting of the BPA held at the Muzaffarpur Planters' Club on Saturday 9 May 1908, some 125 members, with their Branch Secretary W.A. Cox of the Kurnowl indigo concern in the chair, heard Filgate recount the tale of violence during the last six months - the assassination attempt on Sir Andrew Frazer, the shooting of Allen, the attack on L. Tardivel the Mayor of Chandernagore, and now the murder of Mrs and Miss Kennedy. The meeting, closely attentive to the Chairman's remarks on the need for tighter control of the native Press - English and vernacular, and for restricting public meetings in Bengal, passed resolutions urging Government to take immediate and strenuous measures to cope with the situation and recommending in particular that a New Press Act be passed on the lines of Lytton's 1878 legislation which had been repealed in 1882 under Ripon, and that Act VI of 1907 (The Prevention of Seditious Meetings Act) be extended to the whole of Bengal including Calcutta,

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1. Filgate had served as Acting Secretary for some three months following the death at the end of January 1905 of Macnaghten, his predecessor, and in April was elected Secretary. (See Indian Planters' Gazette 11.2., 15.4., 6.5.1905). Whilst Secretary of the BPA he continued to serve as General Manager of Ross & Co., a Muzaffarpur firm of engineers, builders and contractors. Thacker's 1908, 415.

2. Indian Planters Gazette 17.3.1906, 2.2. and 23.2.1907, 15.2.1908.

3. Kingsford had been Chief Presidency Magistrate in Calcutta and had sentenced several terrorists.

to restrict public meetings. Shortly after the meeting, to which the Darjeeling Planters' Association had sent a telegram of support, a 'monster meeting' of local Muzaffarpur non-official Europeans was held, and a memorial drawn up for submission to Government asking, as the BPA meeting had recommended, that the Press Act be recast and that a special Act against anarchists be passed.[1]

Resolution 3 of the BPA meeting had asked for copies of its proceedings to 'be forwarded to every non-official European Association in India including Burma'. Following the lead so set, by 15 May the EAIDA had taken up the cause with the Government, and the Bengal Chamber followed on the 22nd.[2] Urged on by such representations, to which replying to the Defence Association Government promised its 'careful consideration',[3] and by European non-official clamour in the Press,[4] on 8 June 1908 the Indian Legislative Council in a single day passed the Newspapers (Incitement to Offences) Act which allowed confiscation of printing presses and a ban upon offending newspapers, together with the Explosive Substances Act.[5]

What was no less significant than the immediacy of the response of the BPA, the Defence Association and the Darjeeling Planters' Association, was the attempt made to mobilise non-official support on an all-India basis. The BPA, as has been seen, sent copies of its proceedings to all the non-official European Associations in India, including Burma, and though the response of the Upper India

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1. Indian Planters Gazette 9.5. and 16.5.1908, and Dooars Planters' Association Report 1908, 99. While Act VI technically extended to the whole of British India it was operative only in such provinces as the Governor-General might from time to time notify, and was in force in the Punjab and in Eastern Bengal and Assam.

2. EAIDA Report 1908, 11-14, Bengal C/Comm Report 1908, II, 583-4.

3. Reply 28.5.1908 of Indian Government Home Department.

4. See editorials, correspondents' reports and readers' letters in Englishman latter half of May 1908.

5. Leg. Cl. progs. 1908, XLVII, 2-23. The Explosive Substances Act made it an offence to manufacture or possess explosive substances other than for a lawful object, and provided for punishment - together with their accessories - of those intending, attempting or causing an explosion dangerous to life or property.

Chamber was overtaken by the speed with which Government introduced and passed its legislation - it could do no more than congratulate Government when it wrote a letter in June - the Madras Chamber, with its thirty eight members, if still more dilatory since its address was sent only in July, also sent copies of its letter to the Chambers in Bengal, Bombay, the Punjab, Karachi, Upper India and Burma and to the EAIDA.[1] The Bombay Chamber, however, moderate as always, chose not formally to address Government on the matter.[2] It was because leadership was seen to be required that Irwin, Alston and Skinner had made such efforts in Darjeeling, the Duars and Assam to locate prospective members for the Defence Association - and had gone further afield too, to the Terai, Behar and Dehra Dun, and to the UPASI in South India, to whom a letter had been sent seeking planter members there for a revitalised EAIDA[3] - and had then gone down to Calcutta, with some four hundred names to hand,[4] to the abortive 31 July meeting with the Defence Association Council.

Though, as has been seen, their mission was fruitless, the sense of urgency and the search for leadership in the non-official community did not diminish. Anarchy in India did not close with the Muzaffarpur outrage in April which had been incited by seditious writings in the native Press by B.C. Pal and others.[5] The investigation of the outrage itself in fact 'led to the discovery of a prolific anarchist organisation in Calcutta', while Aurobindo Ghose, Tilak and Pal were amongst Indian nationalists who were to be imprisoned

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1. Upper India C/Comm Report 1908, 19, Madras C/Comm Report 1908, -, xv, 93.

2. Madras ... Report ibid., 95.

3. The UPASI however, though sympathetic, refused to become involved in politics as a body, and merely left the question to the district association planters to decide for themselves individually. See UPASI Report 1908, 8, 14-17 and Planters' Chronicle Sept. 1908, III, No. 8, 175. (The UPASI in time was to change its stance and in 1929 appointed its own full time political officer. Speer, 92.)

4. UPASI Report 1908, 14.

5. Indian Planters Gazette 9.5.1908, confession of Khudiram Bose.

that year for their seditious writings.[1] On 7 November occurred the further attempted assassination of Sir Andrew Frazer in Calcutta, followed by the murder in that town two days later of the native policeman who had arrested Khudiram Bose.[2] A new wave of indignation amongst the European community was set off and a public meeting of European non-officials held at Sonpur on 11 November during the race session there, under H.E. Abbot's chairmanship, resolved to approach the Defence Association with a view to forming a strong fund-raising committee the better to carry out an intensive campaign for more measures against sedition.[3] Six days later on 17 November the Bengal Chamber, the CTA and the EAIDA jointly approached the Viceroy by telegram strongly urging the setting up of a special tribunal to deal summarily with persons accused of anarchist offences. This was followed up with a more detailed letter on the 19th stressing that 'the events of the last two months, and in particular the proceedings at Alipore' had conclusively proved that ordinary criminal courts and ordinary criminal law were ineffective against the anarchism prevailing.[4] Following 'serious consideration' by the Viceroy and his advisers of the joint suggestions,[5] and of the latest local clamour in the European Press,[6] a Criminal Law Amendment Act (Act XIV of that year) passed, at lightning speed, through the Legislative Council on 11 December 1908. Its effect was to

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1. Indian Planters Gazette, 16.5.1908, and Argov, 141.

2. Friend of India 8.11.1908, 10.11.1908.

3. Indian Planters Gazette, 21.11.1908. Abbott, this paper's owner, was a well known and popular figure in North Indian planting circles.

4. EAIDA Report 1908, 17-19. At the lengthy trial at Alipore, Calcutta of Aurobindo Ghosh and thirty others which opened on 30 May 1908 revelations were made of the existence of a widespread anarchial organization at work complete with bomb manufacturies and caches of arms and explosive materials.

5. Report ibid., 17, reply to joint telegram by the Viceroy's Private Secretary. See also Bengal C/Comm Report 1908, I, 67: 'this [special tribunal] suggestion was accepted by the Government of India, and was embodied in Act XIV of 1908'.

6. See for example Englishman 21.11.1908, leading article 'Quenching Sedition'.

provide for the suppression of unlawful associations and to allow speedy prosecution without jury in anarchist cases.[1]

Meanwhile the BPA, finding itself suddenly thrust into the non-official limelight through the Muzaffarpur outrage, made the most of its new found fame. Following consideration of the replies received to its General Secretary's letter of 28 May 1908, sent out to twenty five non-official (European) public bodies subsequent to its 9 May meeting, the BPA directors on 8 August decided to issue a draft Open Letter to the Secretary of State Lord Morley, embodying the views of the non-official Europeans in India on the current unrest. After wide circulation of the original draft, the incorporation of suggested emendments, and re-circulation of the amended 'approved draft' for general approval and endorsement, which it obtained in widespread form, the BPA duly sent off the Open Letter to Morley on 19 November, and sent it too to the Times, Standard, Morning Post, Daily Telegraph, Irish Times, Belfast Newsletter and the Scotsman, for good measure.[2] The letter sent off by the BPA and endorsed by the eleven other associations which had approved it in time[3] suggested various measures to deal with the violent unrest in India, advocating tighter control of schools - 'a great number ... are notoriously mere nurseries of sedition' -, stronger Press legislation, and summary trials. It reminded Morley that 'in oriental countries kindness is invariably interpreted as fear, and weakness is looked upon with contempt'.[4]

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1. StMMPr 1908-9, 4. Calling on Government the following August to suppress the Boycott movement still afoot, the Defence Association explained that the movement had 'plentifully watered the crop of anarchism which has grown up'. EAIDA Report 1909, 4, 37-8.

2. Dooars Planters' Association Report 1908, 161-6, 1909, 16.

3. For text see Judicial & Public Dept. papers 1908, No. 4650.

4. Morley circulated the letter in the India Council 'for information'. What influence it had is hard to say, - but it reinforced points already made by the Viceroy Minto who on 12 November had written about 'utterly inadequate criminal procedure ... I am afraid that European public confidence may become dangerously shaken unless we adopt some new machinery' (Mary, Countess of Minto, India Minto and Morley 1905-1910, 251), gave substance to his fear that a panicky European population might take the law into its own hands and chimed absolutely with the stated views of the Calcutta University Vice Chancellor, the great Dr Asutosh Mukerji, that 'the national schools and private colleges are hot-beds of sedition'. Ibid., 254.

However if terrorism and unrest had stirred and shaken the non-official community in 1908 to a degree not experienced since the Ilbert Bill,[1] the community had also become increasingly conscious of important political reforms of the Council structure being hammered out by Morley and Minto and anxious about what they would hold for the non-official European. Here was another issue in which unity and leadership were required. The first step in the evolution of the Indian Legislative Council had been taken seventy five years earlier when the Charter Act of 1833 added a fourth (Legal) Member to the Governor-General's Executive Council for legislative purposes only.[2] Other members had been added by the Charter Act of 1853[3] and in 1861, after the Mutiny, the Indian Councils Act not only further enlarged the Governor-General's Legislative Council, but restoring legislative powers to the Presidency Governments of Madras and Bombay[4] provided them with enlarged Councils too, with the possibility of extending the system to Bengal, the Punjab and the North-Western Provinces and Oudh when the Governor-General so proclaimed.[5] For the non-official community the Act of 1861 was important because it provided for the first time for their entry into the Councils, upon the nomination of Governor-General, Governor, or Lieutenant-Governor. Such a step had been suggested in 1859,[6] now both European and Indian non-officials made their entry into the Councils - at

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1. The terrorism was even to extend to England where Sir William Wyllie, a political aide-de-camp to the Secretary of State, was assassinated on 2 July 1909. StMMPr 1909-10, 1.

2. C. Ilbert, The Government of India, 87.

3. Ibid., 94.

4. Such powers had been taken away from these Governments by the 1833 Charter.

5. The Bengal Council was proclaimed in January 1862, that of the NWP and Oudh in November 1886 and the Punjab Council in April 1897 when a Burma Council was also proclaimed. Ilbert 206, 219 and P.P. 1908, LXXVI.1., 28.

6. P.P.H.C. 1861, XLIII, 285, 289. J.P. Grant the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal had then suggested adding equal numbers of non-official Europeans and Indians to the Indian Legislative Council, and the idea of non-official membership was endorsed by the Viceroy, Canning, for the Provincial Councils as well.

the start in practically equal numbers.[1]

In the next twenty six years twenty European non-officials served on the Viceroy's Council, the pioneer two being W.S. Fitzwilliam, a director of the Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London and China and D. Cowie of the Merchant firm of Colvin, Cowie and Co. In the 1860's three Jardine, Skinner's men sat on the Council, their most distinguished representative being the famous J.R. Bullen-Smith, thrice Chairman of the Bengal Chamber[2] who sat intermittently from 1869 to 1876. H.H. Sutherland of Begg, Dunlop was amongst the other prominent Europeans on the Council in this period, whilst the barrister G.H.P. Evans, intermittently on Council since 1877, was perhaps the most prominent figure in the 1880's. In the Bengal Council the merchants J.N. Bullen, W. Maitland and W. Moran and the barrister A.T. Peterson, all appointed in January 1862,[3] were the first of 32 European members in the next twenty six years. Tradesmen from such firms as Thacker, Spink the publishers were also to join the Council in the course of time. D. Cruickshank the Bengal Chamber President was the most prominent nominee in the mid-1880's. In Madras the Merchants W.R. Arbuthnot and R.O. Campbell had the distinction of being the first two of the 11 non-official Europeans appointed to the local Council in this period, the merchants Alexander Mackenzie and A.F. Brown being amongst the most distinguished and long serving. In Bombay 18 non-official Europeans sat on the Legislative Council in the same period, with the merchant W.B. Tristram as the first nominee and the famous F. Forbes Adam, Chairman of the Bombay Chamber, starting his third two-year term on Council in 1888. Since the first meeting of the NWP and Oudh Legislative Council was only held on 5 January 1887, only one European non-official, T. Conlan a barrister-at-law,

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1. The first non-official appointments to the new Councils in January 1862 were: Governor-General's Council, Europeans 2: Indians 3; Bengal, Bombay and Madras Councils together, Europeans 7: Indians 7. See P.P. 1890, LIV, Return 42.

2. C.E. Buckland, Dictionary of Indian Biography, 394.

3. Only one non-official Indian had been appointed at the same time.

had served on the Council to 1888.[1]

By the end of 1888 plans for a revision of the 1861 Act were well under way, having first been broached by Ripon's successor Dufferin in March 1886 when, noting the mass meetings of the ryots in various districts of Bengal and the 'spread of English political ideas and machinery amongst the natives of India' he sought Kimberley's opinion on a restructuring of the Supreme and Provincial Legislative Councils. Congress was then but a bare three months old, though it had had various precursors, but the Viceroy could warn that Council reform was already 'one of the chief planks in the native liberal platform'.[2] Since Kimberley proved responsive[3] Dufferin proceeded publicly to make clear his readiness for change,[4] to appoint a three man committee,[5] and in November 1888, the last month of his viceroyalty, to send liberal reform proposals to the Home Government.[6] Though Salisbury who had replaced Gladstone as Prime Minister in mid-1886, and Cross who had in consequence replaced Kimberley as Secretary of State were much less ready to move than Dufferin,[7] under pressure from the latter's successor Lansdowne,[8] a new

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1. See P.P. 1890, LIV, Return 42, giving Council membership details 1862 to 1888.

2. Dufferin to Kimberley 21.3.1886 in Dufferin C. 130/5, 27-8.

3. Kimberley to Dufferin 22.4.1886 in ibid. 130/6, 51-2.

4. Public Lett[e]rs from India & General Letters from Bengal 1888, Judicial & Public IX, 1189, speech of Dufferin at Calcutta 16 Feb. 1887 on occasion of Queen's Jubilee.

5. Its members were the Executive Councillors General G.T. Chesney, Sir Charles Aitchison and J. Westland.

6. Public Lett[e]rs ... 1888, Judicial & Public IX, 1169-1206, Govt. of India Home Dept. Public Despatch No. 67 of 1888.

7. Lansdowne C. 558/2, 3-14, Cross to Lansdowne 28.11.1888 to 18.1.1889, and Confidential Public Despatch No. 80 of 1889 in Judicial & Public. Copies of Despatches to India Madras and Bombay 1889, X, 331-4.

8. See Govt. of India Home Dept. Confidential Public Despatch No. 76 of 1889 in Public Lett[e]rs ... 1889II, Judicial & Public XI, 3157-60; and Lansdowne C. 558/2, 36, Lansdowne to Cross 12.2.1889. Lansdowne had assumed office at the start of December 1888.

Indian Councils Act was eventually hammered out in June 1892 (55 & 56 Vict. c. 14).

By the 1892 Act Government nomination of non-official members to Council continued, but with provision for the making of 'recommendations' for such nominated seats which amounted to an elective procedure, discussion of the budget was allowed and interpellations by members on matters of public interest - 'under proper safeguards' as the Indian Home Department had indicated, and the numbers of non-official members was increased.[1]

The non-official Europeans welcomed the measure - the power to question Government, and in the budget discussion to air views on matters close to their hearts, particularly. Under the 1861 Act between six and twelve additional members had been allowed in the Governor-General's Legislative Council, at least half of these to be non-official. Now the numbers (of whom at least half were again to be non-officials) went up to between ten and sixteen. In practice, under the Act's rules, sixteen was the operative number, ten of whom were non-officials: one each recommended by the non-official Legislative Councillors of Bengal, Madras, Bombay and the North-Western Provinces and Oudh, five nominated by the Governor-General 'with reference to legislative business or to represent interests', and one 'recommended' by the Calcutta (sic) Chamber of Commerce. (The Bengal Chamber's dominant position was thus confirmed, and by right now, rather than favour.) One feature, however, was less welcome: though non-official representation had grown, the Indian share in that growth was now much larger than the European. 1894 may serve as an example when Sir G.H.P. Evans, J. Buckingham and P. Playfair represented the Calcutta Bar, Assam and the Bengal (Calcutta) Chamber respectively, but there were seven Indian members of Council -including Pherozeshah Mehta recommended by the Bombay Legislative Council.[2]

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1. P.P. 1890, LIV, [C.-5950]; Govt. of India Home Dept. Public Despatch No. 35 of 1889; [India Office] Public Despatch No. 81 of 1889; Ilbert, 120-1, 348-50.

2. P.P. 1894, LVIII, 639, 643-4, ibid. 1908, LXXVI.I., 39, Ilbert, 118-9.

Of the related enlargement of the Provincial Legislative Councils[1] Indians had likewise secured the larger share: in 1894 in Bengal nine of the eleven non-official additional members were Indians, including Surendranath Banerjea, Lalmohan Ghose and W.C. Bonnerjee representing the Calcutta Corporation, the Presidency Division Municipalities and the Calcutta University Senate, and only two were Europeans, J.N. Stuart and J.G. Womack, recommended by the Bengal Chamber and the Calcutta Trades Association - the latter a 'by favour' appointment.[2] In Bombay of the eleven members only two were European - W.R. Macdonnell and J. Currie, representing the Bombay and Karachi Chambers, and in Madras the figures were the same, with J.A. Boyson as Chamber spokesman and the Rev W. Miller recommended by the University Senate. On the smaller Council of the NWP and Oudh, of the seven non-officials two were European, W.E. Cooper of the Upper India Chamber and W.M. Colvin, a barrister, representing Allahabad University.[3] Only in Burma was the European element more strongly entrenched - awarded two of the four non-official seats on Council, nomination being made after Government consultation with the Rangoon Chamber, the Municipal Committee

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1. In the Madras and Bombay Councils formerly at least one half of the between 4 and 8 additional members (apart from the local Advocate General) had had to be non-officials - now the figure was at least one half of between 8 and 20. For Bengal and the NWP and Oudh where at least one third of the additional members had under the 1861 Act to be non-officials the same provision prevailed, thus when the additional element was at its maximum strength at least 10 of the 20 additional members of the Bengal Council had now to be non-official and in the case of the NWP and Oudh Council at least 8 of its 15 additional members. P.P. 1894, LVIII, 645-62, Ilbert 106,121-2. Maximum Council strength allowed including Viceroy, Governors and Lieutenant-Governors was 146, namely: Imperial Legislative Council 25, Bombay and Madras 24 each, Bengal 21, NWP and Oudh 16, and in the later established Councils of Punjab and Burma 10 each and that of Eastern Bengal and Assam (established October 1905) 16. P.P. 1908, LXXVI.I. 25, 39-41.

2. CTA Report, 1893, 22-3.

3. P.P. 1894, LVIII, 640-3.

and the Port Commissioners.[1]

Before 1892 the Defence Association had only twice concerned itself with the Council membership issue - in November 1889 when Bradlaugh was introducing an Indian Councils Amendment Bill in Parliament,[2] which the EAIDA Council decided had little chance of being taken seriously there (the Bill duly died), and in March 1890 when the Government's Councils Bill which culminated in the Act of 1892 was before the Lords. On that occasion the Association did write to Sir Roper Lethbridge in Britain, in May 1890, but with so little sense of urgency that it was not until December that they reminded him that he had not replied. They had wished to make clear to Parliament their serious doubts about enlargement of the Councils and their opposition to the principle of election. But when the lethargic Lethbridge did reply - in July 1891! - it was to announce that he was himself in favour of the gradual introduction of the principle of representation. Since Bruce the Association's newly appointed London Agent was still feeling his way it was not until the formation of the London Committee in March 1892 that any effective EAIDA voice on the Council issue could be made audible - and even then only mutedly given EAIDA parsimony.[3] If the Association attempted and achieved little as a pressure group in Britain it was even slower off the mark in India. Rather than making its views known while regulations were in the planning stage it stirred into action only when the Bengal Government Proclamation and Regulations under the new Act were made public in mid-March 1893. If then, post facto, it grumbled in a letter of 8 April[4] to the Bengal Government about the dwindling

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1. P.P. 1908, LXXVI.I., 28-9. In Burma the problem was to find any Burman worthy of nomination. In the Punjab, to find any suitable European, both able and free to accept office, to nominate to the five strong non-official block. P.P. 1908, LXXVI.II., Enclosure No. XXI, 17, No. XXII, 2. (In both of these Councils at least one third of a maximum of nine nominated members had to be non-officials.)

2. See P.P.H.C. Bills, Public 1890 V, 475-94, Bill 56.

3. EAIDA Cl. progs. 28.11.1889; 27.3., 24.4. and 27.11. 1890; 27.8.1891; 28.3. and 25.4.1892; EAIDA Report 1890, 4, 42-4 and ibid. 1891, 42-4.

4. A further representation was made about two months later.

share of Europeans in the non-official Council membership[1] or to the Government of India in August at the lack of planter representation, it could carry little weight. The award of a discretionary seat to the Calcutta Trades Association was a gesture by the Lieutenant-Governor, and it was the recognition of the importance of the tea industry which swayed the Viceroy in appointing a planter to his Council not the belated protests of the EAIDA.[2] The Defence Association Council might argue that 'the only way to get any representative institution of any kind to work in India was to have equal European and native representation',[3] but it had done remarkably little to mobilise the wide support needed to force its views upon Government.[4]

Nevertheless in the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth many eminent European non-officials sat as regular or occasional additional members in the local and Imperial Legislative Councils of India. Amongst such men the Bengal Chamber's representatives in the Governor-General's Council were by far the most important - men such as James Mackay, P. Playfair, Allan Arthur and C.W.N. Graham - both in their status in the community and

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1. The Proclamation of 16 March had provided for 'not more than one' seat to be assigned to 'such association or associations of merchants, manufacturers, or tradesmen as the Lieutenant-Governor may from time to time prescribe'.

2. CTA Report 1893, 37-8, ITA Report 1893, 17, and EAIDA Cl. progs. 24.3., 28.4. and 26.5.1893.

3. Remark of G. Irving in EAIDA Council meeting 28.4.1893.

4. The EAIDA later explained its position thus: 'Previous to the enactment of the Indian Councils Act of 1892 this Association had not favoured any enlargement of Indian Legislatures on the ground that, the non-official European element being very small and unable to affect official decisions in the Legislatures, it would be wiser, while such bodies remained mainly official, that no large European non-official representatives should be held constructively liable in part for their proceedings and enactments. On the passing of the above statute, however, and with the introduction of a larger Indian element and greater freedom in discussing budgets, even when Acts to introduce new taxation were not passed, this Association began to claim a fuller representation for non-official Europeans than the Government had conceded, but without success'. EAIDA Report 1907, 21-2.

weight in Council, followed perhaps by the planting, mining and jute interest representatives in the Councils on the occasions when their particular industry was under discussion, and then by the representatives of the Chambers in the Provincial Councils - W.R. Macdonnell and C.H. Armstrong of Bombay, for example, G.G. Arbuthnot and H. Scott of Madras, M. de P. Webb of Karachi, W.R. Stikeman of Burma and Upper India's Cooper and McRobert - together with such as J.G. Womack and A.H. Wallis of the Calcutta Trades Association in the case of the Bengal Council.[1]

In the fourteen years since the Councils Act of 1892 was introduced and these men had begun their various terms of service the pace of politics in India had sharply quickened, as has already been seen. Shortly after Minto's arrival in India therefore, in May to July 1906 a dialogue was opened between him and Morley, the new Secretary of State. When Morley in response wondered 'whether we could not now make a good start in the way of reform in the popular direction' - though not he hastened to add on British parliamentary lines which was not, he agreed, 'desirable or possible, or even conceivable', he found Minto in like mind.[2] By August 1906, therefore, a Committee had been appointed in India under Sir Arundel Arundel the Home Member to study possible reforms. Following the Committee's report, an announcement on the subject by Minto on 27 March 1907 in the Legislative Council and an exchange of Despatches with England, a tentative project of reform was circulated to the Local Governments, while wide soundings were made more generally. By 1 October 1908 a suggested scheme of reforms was ready for submission to the Government in Britain. It was well received and on 25 May 1909 the new Indian Councils Act, 1909

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1. See, for example, pages 154, 179, 202, 211-12 and Bengal C/Comm Report 1894-95, I, 11-13, and Leg.Cl. progs. Bombay 1895, 1896, 1905, 1907, XXIII, XXIV, XLIII, XLV, Madras 1903, XXXI, Burma 1907, UP 1903, 1906, Bengal 1897, XXIX.

2. Minto to Morley 16.5. to 5.7.1906 in Morley C. MSS.Eur.D. 573/8 and Morley to Minto 6.6. and 15.6.1906 in ibid., 573/1.

(9 Edw. VII c.4) became law.[1]

During the working out of the reforms[2] both Indian and non-official European views had been solicited by the Local Governments. Those of the Europeans were put forward both by private individuals and by such specialist bodies as Port Trusts, but the dominant voices were those of the Chambers, Trades Associations, the ITA and UPASI, other planting interests and the Bengal Chamber's various satellite institutions. As in 1892 it was the Councils' composition and constitution rather than such issues as budget discussion and the right of interpellation (now extended)[3] which attracted most attention - and disquiet.[4] At the extreme end was the view, unusual in being openly expressed, of R. Fischer a proprietor in Madura District: he was 'entirely opposed to giving them [the native Indians] political rights or privileges of any kind'. At the other, and almost as untypical, was the moderate opinion of Montagu de Pomeroy Webb, Chairman of the Karachi Chamber, who was 'fully in accord with the principle of giving to the educated and influential classes in this country opportunities for coming into closer contact with the officers of Government ... [and] a larger share ... than at present in the actual work of Government'.[5] (So far of course Karachi had escaped any experience of Indian political unrest!) Many views were of course rather narrowly sectional. The individual missionaries approached by Government, if sympathetic to the reform scheme, often narrowed

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1. Morley C. 573/2 (Arundel Report) and P.P. 1907, LVIII [Cd. 3710.] and ibid. 1908, LXXVI.I., II. [Cds. 4426., 4435. and 4436.].

2. For further background details see John Viscount Morley, Recollections, II Book V, and S.A. Wolpert, Morley and India 1906-1910, S.R. Wasti, Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement 1905 to 1910 and M.N. Das, India under Morley and Minto.

3. 1909 Act, section 5.

4. The appointment of Saiyid Husain Bilgrami and Krishna Gobinda Gupta to the India Council in London in 1907-8 and of Satyendra Prasanna Sinha as Law Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in April 1909 had added to the disquiet.

5. P.P. 1908, LXXVI.I., 376, 587.

their concern to a plea for a Native Christian to be amongst the four minority interest members proposed for the Imperial Legislative Council.[1] W.T. Cathcart, Chairman of the Surma Valley branch of the ITA,[2] for his part stressed 'more especially the claim of the Tea Industry to an increased representation'. (He was alive however to the dangers in the scheme: 'a proposal to give an increased Native representation, without their being accorded a compensating equivalent' would make the non-official European community's position 'very much worse than at present'.)[3]

The Defence Association was sooner awake to the implications of the constitutional reform question in 1907 than it had been to the previous reform of the Councils two decades earlier. The EAIDA Council therefore responded to the Government of India's August 1907 circular by consulting 'all the influential [non-official European] representative bodies in the country',[4] and then, thus armed, addressed the Indian and Bengal Governments on the proposed reforms late in February 1908. Their main point was that with the substantial non-official European vested interests in the country any arrangement for representation that did not include 'at least 2 non-official Europeans on the Imperial Council and 7 non-official Europeans on each of the Provincial Councils' would be 'neither adequate', from their community's point of view, 'nor just nor safe'.[5] So far the Association had

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1. See opinions of Rev A. Andrew, United Free Church Mission, Chingleput and Rev C.H. Monahan, Wesleyan Mission, Tiruvallur in ibid. 265-7 and 276.

2. Cathcart, who was also President of the Cachar Planters' Association, sat in the Legislative Council of Eastern Bengal and Assam.

3. P.P. 1908, LXXVI.II., Enclosure No. XXIII, 11.

4. Apart from the 6 leading Chambers of Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Rangoon, Karachi and Upper India, those at Delhi, Narayanganj (Naraingunge) and Chittagong were also addressed whilst 4 Trades Associations, 7 North Indian tea associations, the UPASI and the Nilgiri Planters' Association in the South, the BPA and 2 jute associations made up the 25 associations consulted by letter on 1 October 1907.

5. EAIDA Report 1907, 6, 28-30.

shown itself alert, active and decided. But it lacked weight of numbers to give force to its views and its follow-up campaign was slow and inadequate. In India this consisted of a further letter to the Government of India in mid-February 1909 arguing that: 'Under the proposed arrangements, apart from the small and wholly inadequate representation proposed for the Chambers of Commerce and other similar bodies, European non-officials generally have no prospect whatever of securing the return of candidates acceptable to them ... [Accordingly] it is submitted ... one-third of the elected members should ... be elected solely by Europeans partly in the towns and partly in the mofussil'.[1] In Britain it consisted of a letter to the Secretary of State, for which breach of protocol the Council suffered a snub from the India Office, and correspondence in the Times and the Standard.[2] In neither country can the Defence Association's activities have created much of a stir.[3] The contrast was sharp with the successful campaign launched by the Muslim community with its deputation to the Viceroy headed by the Aga Khan on 1 October 1906 for separate communal representation,[4] or even with the efforts of the Eurasians to secure special community representation. Largely by virtue of a letter from A.J. Robertson - probably a barrister - on their behalf addressed to the Secretary of State in August 1907, and forwarded by Morley to Minto 'for ... consideration', their case was successfully brought to Government's

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1. EAIDA Report 1908, 5, 33-36.

2. Ibid. 1909, 16-19.

3. Whilst feeling strongly that 'some counterpoise is absolutely needed to the Indian influence' coming into the Councils (ibid. 1908, 5), the EAIDA Council decided against backing this with firm action. As it explained in a letter to the Bengal Chamber on 12 July 1909: 'The Council have refrained from any kind of public movement under existing circumstances, lest a public agitation should embarrass the Government'. Ibid. 1909, 19.

4. The success of the deputation spurred on the inception of the All India Muslim League, founded in December 1906. L. Bahadur, The Muslim League Its History, Activities & Achievements, 20-21.

attention.[1] The Defence Association made no such impact.[2]

The problem for the devisers of the 1909 Act had been to enlarge the number and scope of non-officials to satisfy as many aspirations as possible, to increase the number of official members so as to ensure control, and yet to avoid making the Councils too unwieldy to be effective legislative instruments. In the event they chose to raise the total number of Additional members in all the various Councils from the old maximum of 126 to a new one of 370[3] in the process replacing the 39 recommended and nominated non-officials[4] by 135 freely elected members.[5] These changes made it possible to avoid some of the awkward clashes and compromises required by the small size of the old Councils. In the Imperial Legislative Council, with a maximum membership pushed up from 25 to 69 it was now possible to give the Bombay as well as the Bengal Chamber an assured seat. Similarly in the Bengal Council, 54 strong now instead of 21,[6] the Chamber could be given two seats while yet assuring a seat apiece for the CTA and a planter representative. In Bombay, where only the home Chamber had been assured of a seat and Karachi came in by favour as it were, both were now represented as a matter of course, while in Madras where similarly its

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1. Robertson's letter, sent from a London, Temple area address, appears in P.P. 1908, LXXVI.I., 89-90.

2. The European commercial Associations, the CTA, ITA and so on answered the August circular mainly by pushing their own claims. With some exceptions - such as the grumbles of those Chambers unrepresented in the Viceroy's Council - most seemed reasonably satisfied with the enlarged and more assured European representation that was secured.

3. P.P. 1910, LXVII, 1092; 1909 Act, First Schedule.

4. The provisions for the Burma and Punjab Councils did not provide for formal recommendations, but in the case of Burma non-official advice on the European nominations to be made was taken de facto (see page 330) and quite likely also in the Punjab.

5. For the Act's detailed Regulations see P.P. 1910, LXVII, [Cd. 4987.].

6. Other Council increases were: Bombay and Madras both from 24 to 49, NWP and Oudh (UP) from 16 to 49, Eastern Bengal and Assam 16 to 43, Punjab 10 to 27 and Burma from 10 to 18.

Chamber had held an assured seat and the UPASI one 'by favour', there were now three assured non-official European seats, one apiece for the Chamber, the Trades Association, and the planters. In the UP[1] there was a reverse, the Upper India Chamber - with an assured seat- being the only community representative in an enlarged Council, (the Allahabad University seat held by T. Conlan for six years till his death in 1905 had passed to Indian hands),[2] but in the Punjab the recently formed Chamber secured a permanent place. The greatest gains of all were made in the new Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam where one seat for 'Associations of merchants' became two for tea and one for jute. (Burma did nearly as well since from there being no assured European representation, one was now certain - to its Chamber, and three very probable in all.)[3] These figures, moreover, in every case represented the almost assured, regular strength of non-official European representation. On special occasions as during preparation of Mining or Assam tea coolie legislation European 'experts' would be temporarily added to Council, whilst in places such as Behar, Chittagong, Rangoon and planting districts generally non-official Europeans, as in the period prior to the 1909 Act, still had good chances of getting onto the Councils as representatives of Port Trusts, Municipalities or District Boards, as Filgate thus did on behalf of the Tirhut District Boards in the Bengal Council.[4] Notwithstanding, the Council membership increases

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1. The North-Western Provinces and Oudh had changed name to the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh in 1902.

2. UP Leg. Cl. progs. 11.4.1905, 1-2, P.P. 1908, LXXVI.I., 717.

3. For columnar comparison of the composition of the pre- and post-1909 Act Councils, along with those of 1912 (partially changed from the 1909 Act Councils by the Delhi Durbar proclamation of December 1911), see P.P. 1913, XLVII, 599-603.

4. See Indian Planters Gazette 20.1.1912. At a meeting of the Bengal Council on 18 February 1911 an Indian member - concerned at the Saran, Champaran, Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga Boards having respectively a 44:65:44 and 72 per cent European element on them - complained that 'the District and Local Boards of the Tirhut Division are practically manned and absolutely controlled by the European community'. Bengal Leg. Cl. progs., XLIII, 24,31.

under the 1909 Act worked numerically in favour of the non-official Indians as against their European counterparts.[1]

After the activity of 1908 and 1909 - years of unrest, Council reform and for the Defence Association of bitter criticism of its lack of adequate community leadership, the President was probably glad to report at the February 1911 AGM on the past year 'as one of peace and quietness'.[2] The Association had had merely routine matters to deal with, other than a protest voiced against Morley's claim in his budget debate for a Mandate Theory of the subordination of the Indian Government which would have rendered the Governor-General in Council 'merely ... his Agent' - a claim the Association denounced as 'subordinating the interests of India to party politics'![3]

1911 was also a quiet year, though marked by the royal visit of King George V for the imperial Coronation Durbar at Delhi. The Association did protest however at proposals to amend the Arms Act which would require Europeans to take out licences, and it objected vehemently to the Viceroy's clemency to the Khulna dacoit gang, which though guilty was released on

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1. Leaving aside the two nominated experts to the provincial Councils who could be either officials or non-officials, the assured non-official European representation had to be viewed in the light of the total non-official strength of the new Councils, namely: India 32, Bengal 31, Bombay 28, Madras 26, UP 26, Eastern Bengal and Assam 23, Punjab 14 and Burma 9, in the instance where the nominated complement was full and officials therein at their maximum. In addition to the specific non-official European interests provided for as detailed, the elected elements of the Councils allowed for representation of landholders, of port commissioners, corporations, municipalities and district boards, of universities, of Indian commerce including mills, and of Mahomedans. As with the elected element so too were the non-official Indians likely to outweigh their European counterparts in the nominated section of the Councils under which 'minor interests and smaller classes' (such as Jains, Sikhs, Buddhists and Eurasians) were to be provided for 'from time to time as the particular needs of the moment and the claims of each community may allow'. P.P. 1910, LXVII, 1088.

2. EAIDA Report 1910, 33. The year had seen a change of Viceroy, Baron Hardinge of Penshurst taking over the office from Minto in November 1910.

3. Ibid., 3-4, 11-14.

bond. But it refused to join the Behar Planters' Association in their move to secure an Act shielding Government officials from being sued for official actions taken in the course of duty, popular though the move was.[1] The Defence Association's most important activity in 1911 related however to Government's reconsideration of the electoral regulations relating to Legislative Council membership. In correspondence with Government in June it claimed for the non-official European community the same separate representation as had been given to the Mahomedans and stressing that the Europeans were'entitled to a far higher proportion of representatives than two out of 25 elected members in the Imperial Council and three out of 26 elected members on the Bengal Council', claimed an additional seat on the Imperial Legislative Council to represent the ratepayers of Calcutta, two further elected members for this group on the Bengal Council and provision for 'general' non-official members from the European community on the other Councils as well.[2] . The appeal was unavailing and the irritated Defence Association was the more thoroughly annoyed therefore, as were many of the other non-official European bodies, by the 'high-handed' way in which Government sprang the announcement on 12 December 1911 of the transfer of the Capital to Delhi without any prior consultation. In February 1912 the Association despatched a remonstrance to Government on the issue to which it attached a further attack on the heavy expenditure consequent upon the move and a call for ten non-official European places (Bengal Chamber and Tea two each, CTA, jute, railways, mining, Calcutta ratepayers and mofussil residents one each) on the Bengal Council. The Government's curt dismissal of the protest showed, however, how little weight the Association could muster.[3]

A major change in the fortunes of the Defence Association was nevertheless in the offing, much influenced by the changes announced at the Delhi Durbar. These changes, which abolished the Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam,

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1. EAIDA Report 1911, 6-8, 21-7, 32-3, Dooars Planters' Association Report 1911, vi, 104-6, 123-4.

2. In order to strengthen the claim it was argued that domicileds were part of the European community.

3. EAIDA Report 1911, 4-6, 14-17, 27-32.

transformed a reconstructed Bengal into a Presidency with a Governor like Bombay and Madras,[1] and set up a Lieutenant-Governorship of Bihar (Chota Nagpur) and Orissa and a (restored) Chief Commissionership of Assam,[2] in the process abolishing two existing Legislative Councils and establishing three new ones in their stead. In the old 54-man Bengal Council two seats had been assured to the Chamber and one each to the CTA and planting interest and in the 43-man Council of Eastern Bengal and Assam two tea and one jute interest seats, or seven in all. Now Europeans received assured seats in the new Councils as follows: five in the new 54-man Bengal Council (Chamber 2, CTA 1, tea-planting 1, and 1 to the European commercial community outside Calcutta and Chittagong), three seats (tea-planting) in the new 26-man Council of Assam, and two seats (one for planting and one for mining) in the new Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council. Their number of assured seats had thus risen from seven to ten, but in the meanwhile the number of seats in the three Councils had grown from 97 to 125 and their elected membership from 44 to 60, so that Indian non-official interests (despite their loss of one previously assured seat for Indian commerce in the old Eastern Bengal and Assam Council) had increased their representation much more than their European counterparts had done. (The minor changes effected in other existing Councils at the time, and in the Legislative Council granted not long afterwards to the Central Provinces had no direct bearing on non-official European interests.)[3]

However the changes had other consequences. In Eastern Bengal and Assam the tea planters, once their initial trepidation at separation from Calcutta had subsided, had found the Lieutenant-Governors Sir Lancelot Hare and Sir Charles Bayley sympathetic.[4] But with only two Council

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1. For a discussion of the usage of the word Presidency see G. Chesney, Indian Polity, ch. IV.

2. The new changes came into effect on 1 April 1912.

3. See P.P. 1913, XLVII [Cd. 6714.] and 1914, LXIII [Cd. 7370.].

4. Dooars Planters' Association Report 1911, xi, 11, 134. Hare's predecessor, Sir Joseph Fuller, who had been the province's first Lieutenant-Governor had retired early after a disagreement with the Viceroy. See P.P. 1906, LXXXI [Cd.3242.].

seats available to them there had been much rivalry between the Assam and Surma Valley branches of the ITA and the Dooars Planters' Association. Their votes for the two seats had been in the ratio 4:4:2,[1] but by an oversight of the Surma Valley branch the Dooars' Chairman A.W.C. Chaplin had been elected - and then unseated on a Surma Valley appeal. The Dooars Association had consequently corresponded with Government, protesting loud and long at being 'shut out from representation', until eventually it was allotted a nominated additional member's seat and the promise of this becoming an elected seat in November 1912.[2] Now the territorial rearrangement separated the contestants and the Dooars body, included in the new Bengal constituency, secured the election of its Chairman Chaplin to represent the Dooars, Darjeeling, Terai and Chittagong planters.[3] He thus joined Norman Michael and J.C. Shorrock from the Bengal Chamber and W.T. Grice from the CTA.

For the Indian Mining Association there was a similar problem - whilst part of the Raniganj coalfield remained in Bengal, the Jherria and a part of the Raniganj field were in the Chota Nagpur division of the new province of Bihar and Orissa, and so administered from Patna rather than the much more convenient Calcutta. The IMA memorialised Government, asking that the Manbhum district should remain under Bengal administration, but were refused. (They were mollified perhaps by being allowed to elect the mining member on the new province's Council, their former Chairman W.A. Lee being the first representative.)[4] The Bihar and Orissa planting seat was allotted to the BPA,[5] Filgate becoming its first holder. A Scottish missionary, the Rev A. Campbell, was also elected

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1. P.P. 1910, LXVII, 1061.
2. Dooars Planters' Association Report 1909, viii, xiv and ibid. 1910, viii and 1911, iv.
3. Ibid., 1912, vi.
4. IMA Report 1911, 13, 162-3, iii, ibid. 1912, 4, 100, P.P. 1913, XLVII, 306.
5. P.P. ibid., 307.

to the Bihar and Orissa Council, as a District Board representative - one of a number of missionaries in India to serve in this way.

As though terrorism, the Morley-Minto reforms, the Delhi Durbar and the bombshell of the movement of the capital to Delhi and reshaping of the provinces had not done enough to raise the blood pressure of the non-official Europeans, 1912 also saw the appointment of a Public Services Commission which seemed to threaten the very citadel of British India, the ICS. The success of Satyendranath Tagore in passing the competitive examination in 1863, so becoming the first Indian member of the ICS, had been a portent. The 1870 Act (33 Vict. c.3) providing 'additional facilities ... for the employment of Natives of India of proved merit and ability in the Civil Service of Her Majesty in India', and the Lytton Rules of 1879 designed to give effect to it by the creation of a Statutory Civil Service had been another. Their provision 'that a proportion not exceeding one-fifth of the total number of Civilians appointed by the Secretary of State to the Civil Service in any one year should be Natives selected in India by the Local Governments' had been little used in practice, there had been no great influx of Statutory Civilians, but the breach had been made in principle.[1]

In 1886-7 that breach had been widened by the India Public Service Commission under Sir Charles Aitchison, set up to examine the Covenanted Civil Service and the judicial and executive branches of the Uncovenanted Service, (and thereafter the lower levels of the latter Service). A little shiver of fear ran through the non-official community.[2]

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1. P.P. 1888, XLVIII, 44-48 [C.-5327.] Report of the Public Service Commission, 1886-87.

2. Against the one Indian Covenanted member of the Civil Service before 1870, in 1887 the number already stood at twelve (P.P. 1888, XLVIII, 69). Even in the non-extreme Bombay there was doubt about having 'a fair trial and no favour' in the Civil Service ranks. Admission of Indians, it was contended, had to be prudently interpreted in accord with the 'so far as ... they may be qualified' sentiments of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. Bombay C/Comm Report Report 1886, 586, Chairman's remarks to January 1887 AGM.

W.H. Hudson and D.S. White, the non-official European and Eurasian representatives, were appalled by the flood of evidence and memorials supplied by the Indians, and Hudson minuted a protest at the onesidedness of the enquiry and pressed the need for obtaining European non-official opinions.[1] A strong memorial, 'got up' by Jardine, Skinner and signed by thirty four leading Calcutta European houses was thereafter forwarded under the Bengal Chamber's auspices, which in discreet language pointed the danger of allowing an Indian influx into the ICS. India needed a top administration thoroughly English in character it stressed, and the Viceroy, though deprecating the memorial as 'rather a sensational paper' was quick nevertheless to hint to Aitchison that the Commission's recommendations should be kept very moderate.[2] When these were made they were seen to be so, though this doubtless resulted from the conservatism of the bureaucracy itself rather than the prompting of non-officials. The most important changes recommended, and introduced in 1892, were the establishment of Provincial Civil Services, recruited in India, which would embody the higher ranks of the old undifferentiated Uncovenanted Service and the transfer to them of a proportion of the positions hitherto held by the ICS, appointment thereto to be attained on proven ability and merit.[3] What had been ineffectively provided for by Lytton, now became a reality.[4]

Now in August 1912 another Commission had been appointed under Lord Islington, with W.C. Madge as the one non-

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1. Bengal C/Comm Report 1886-7, 433-5.

2. Ibid. 435-9 and Dufferin C. 130/8(a), 53, Dufferin to Cross 2.4.1887.

3. See Commission's conclusions and recommendations in P.P. 1888, XLVIII, 133ff. and ibid. 1890 LIV [C.-5926.] Correspondence relating to the Report of the ... Commission, also L.S.S. O'Malley, The Indian Civil Service 1601-1930, 216-18.

4. Indians had made solid gains, but domiciled Europeans and Eurasians had again to complain of a bias against them since, where necessary, the Secretary of State was empowered to recruit Europeans outside India to the Provincial Services.

official European or Eurasian representative amongst its twelve members. The need for a review was clear enough - the rapid spread of higher education, the improvement of communications, the enlargement of the activities of Government, vast increases in industry, trade and commerce in India - all made the findings of 1886-7 seem out of date. (There was also the problem that Burma had not been included in the Aitchison review.)[1] But coming so soon after the Durbar pronouncements, and including in its instructions the review of 'such limitations as still exist in the employment of non-Europeans' in the higher civil service,[2] the Commission was very much a red rag to the non-official European bull.

Indians had made too many advances - in the Provincial Services, in the Legislative Councils, even onto the Councils of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy - the cry against Indianization of the higher Civil Service rang out loudly as the Commission went about the country holding its hearings. 'No scheme would find favour with non-official Europeans which might possibly impair the essential British character of the administration' declared the European Defence Association.[3] 'We consider', its President W.B. Braithwaite bluntly told the Commissioners, 'that one of the strongest objections to simultaneous examinations and the resultant wholly Indian training of candidates is that it would inevitably lead to attempts on the part of political agitators to exercise an undesirable influence upon young Indian candidates at the most impressionable period of their lives'.[4] N. McLeod of the Bengal Chamber's committee, speaking for an organisation representing twenty recognised associations and thirty seven per cent of the trade of India, emphatically declared that the time had

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1. P.P. 1916, VII, 87-102 [Cd. 8232.] Royal Commission on the Public Services in India. Report ...., I, 2-16.
2. Ibid., 88.
3. European Defence Association Report 1912, 9.
4. P.P. 1914, XXI, 896.

certainly not come to increase the Indian element in the ICS[1] - though at the time only 56 Indians were to be found amongst its 1,294 covenanted members.[2] That citadel must be held: as A.W. Binning, Chairman of the Burma Chamber put it, 'if and when there is to be any development in the direction of the admission of Natives to the higher ranks of the Government service, it should be on purely local lines'.[3] Even 'moderate' Bombay came out with a firm objection to increased Indianization of the Covenanted Service - any 'serious change' in the character of the administration would affect European investment in India warned Sir Henry Proctor, the head of the Bombay Steam Navigation Company.[4] Even the missionaries made the same point: 'In theory one may be inclined to favour the devolution of responsibility for the administration of the country upon the people of India', stated the Rev A. Andrew of Chingleput, 'but [how familiar that word] the time has not yet come for this'. He argued as assuredly an overwhelming majority of the non-official Europeans would have done: there was great danger should 'the European element in the highest branch of the administration be reduced'.[5]

From 1909 to 1913 the non-official European community had been buffetted continuously by harsh winds of change. There had been a corresponding search for a new unity among them and for new leadership and the Defence Association had been under very positive pressure to provide this. But it was hampered by the shortcomings of its constitution, by the nature of its Council chaired by men who though distinguished in the fields of commerce or industry could afford

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1. P.P. 1914, XXI, 1107-8.
2. Ibid., XXII, 728.
3. Ibid., 166.
4. Ibid., 726-31.
5. P.P. 1914, XXI, 380-1.

it only intermittent attention, and by the presence as its Secretary of a man, W.C. Madge, whose prime loyalty was to the Eurasians, and who since 1910 had also been a member of the Imperial Legislative Council. Madge had held on to his Defence Association post for a quarter of a century, and at no point had he produced the drive and imagination which was required. In 1909 the Indian Planters Gazette had commented: 'To thoughtful minds it must appear strangely fatuous that, while the clock of destiny is ticking loudly in our ears, so many men of ripe judgement ... should be or seem fast asleep'.[1] In the next few years several distinguished figures had served the Defence Association - H.C. Begg and C.W.N. Graham apportioning the presidency for 1909/10,[2] followed by A.M. Monteith and F.H. Stewart, with Archy Birkmyre and the East Indian Railway Agent Sir William Dring amongst those serving on its Council.[3] But though there had been a little more vigour in the Association's activities and a slight rise in membership as compared with the early years of the century, it remained a static body with limited membership.

Then in February 1912 the Defence Association Council decided to send every EAIDA member a copy of its letter to Government on the Durbar changes and to invite 'frank and full expression of opinion' upon it, urging members moreover to 'make an effort' to attend the forthcoming AGM where the whole issue would be discussed.[4] Most members remained passive in the face of the appeal,[5] but there was one reply of quite exceptional vigour and cogency. This was from a Dudley B. Myers, a Calcutta merchant on the point of retirement,[6]

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1. Indian Planters Gazette, 30.1.1909.
2. Begg had departed for Britain before the end of the year.
3. EAIDA Reports 1909-1911.
4. EAIDA Cl. progs. 5.2.1912.
5. The Englishman of 26 March reported the meeting as only 'fairly attended'.
6. A profile of Myers's career in Commerce 26.3.1913 noted that he had first come to India in 1882 to serve as an assistant with Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Co. and had been of late years one of the senior partners of J. Thomas & Co. the important Calcutta agency house. On the point of retirement he had 'already ceased to take an active part in the business'.

a member since 1908,[1] who being about to leave for England just before the AGM on 25 March, sent in a letter for consideration and discussion thereat. In his letter, read out at the meeting, Myers urged that new proposals should be worked out to ensure that the EAIDA was used to better advantage. This was a subject which he had already broached in recent correspondence in the Press, and he was sure that if the Association would take steps to become more truly representative, to broaden its organisational framework, to popularise itself by closer contact with its members, and to secure a full time paid Secretary, the Press would be co-operative in giving it publicity.[2]

Myers's letter evoked a response in the Association's Council, and the lawyer H.W.S. Sparkes (a Council member and former President) put forward the outlines of an Association reconstruction scheme.[3] The Council accepted the need for such a scheme and set up a Special Committee to study proposals in detail. The results of the Committee's proposals were brought back for approval at the adjourned annual general meeting in the following month. The main suggestions were for a lowering of the subscriptions to Rs. 5 per annum to obtain a wider membership, and for mofussil members to be enabled to vote at the Association's Calcutta meetings by proxy, instead of personal attendance being required as heretofore. The Committee's scheme provided moreover for a membership drive among European assistants whose firms would pay the subscriptions for them, a widening of the Association's own Council, and a renewed search for representation in London where the recent formation of an East India Section of the London Chamber of Commerce had served to emphasize the Defence Association's absence from that city. The meeting, held on 15 April at the Dalhousie Institute - a vastly larger

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1. His name had not featured on the EAIDA's list of members the previous year.

2. See AGM proceedings in EAIDA Report 1911. Such proceedings given in the Association's Reports carried detail omitted in the meeting reports published in the newspapers.

3. Meeting report in Englishman 26.3.1912.

auditorium than the Defence Association's office rooms in which the meagerly attended previous AGMs had been held - received the proposals with the greatest interest, approved and adopted the reconstruction scheme, and at the Council's request agreed to the two further meetings necessary for a change in the rules to allow it to be put into effect. (A splendid illustration of the old adage, where there's a will, there's a way!)[1] 'Important Scheme of Re-constitution' ran the Englishman's eye-catching headlines on the proceedings, 'Larger and more effective Body to be Formed. Appeal to the European Community'. 'A new spirit' stated that paper's leading article 'breathes through the [Defence Association] speeches'.[2] At Extraordinary General Meetings of the Association held on 15 July and 15 August 1912 under the presidency of W.D. Braithwaite (1912/13), the re-constitution scheme was duly (and enthusiastically) approved.[3]

The reconstruction of The British and European Association, as the EAIDA was now restyled to avoid confusion with the Anglo-Indian of the renamed Eurasian Associations - between mid-August and December it further changed its title to European Defence Association[4] - had come at an opportune moment. The Secretary of State, very aware of the anger and resentment excited amongst Europeans in India by recent changes, had urged Lord Carmichael, the first Governor of the new Bengal, to treat the community with particular care and attention. There would be a more attentive ear to their views than had been the case in recent years.[5] And in November 1912 Myers returned to Calcutta, and having been elected to Council in his absence by the

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1. Englishman, 26.3. and 16.4.1912.

2. Ibid., 16.4.1912.

3. See proceedings in ibid., 16.7. and 16.8.1912. 'Applications for membership' Braithwaite reported to the later meeting, had 'become exceedingly numerous during the past few weeks' - a result of widened publicity and newly aroused interest in the re-invigorated Association.

4. Herein EDA for short.

5. J.H. Broomfield, Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth-Century Bengal, 42-48.

March AGM, threw himself into an indefatigable campaign on the Association's behalf. Madge had resigned from the secretaryship in April, and H.R. Pankridge, a barrister, became paid Secretary in his place. He had already shown a new initiative by visiting Madras and Bombay in September and October on the Association's behalf.[1] But Myers, very much the right man at the right time, not only now 'personally visited the heads of all the best known Calcutta firms' and successfully solicited numerous Association membership applications and over Rs. 10,000 in donations, but at 'his own personal expense' toured extensively in India on behalf of the Association. Leaving Calcutta on 12 January 1913 Myers visited Madras, Bombay, Karachi, Lahore, Delhi and Cawnpore, everywhere addressing meetings on the Association's behalf.[2] The tour paid dividends. It had been made just three weeks after the attempted assassination of the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, on his state entry into Delhi[3] and while the non-official Europeans, reeling under the shift to Delhi and other changes, were looking anxiously, the planters especially, for strong and vigorous leadership. Moreover the clamour for a lead was for once India-wide, for the Public Services Commission had been traversing the country, sparking off the widest publicity for its proceedings and for the claims which every group in Indian society had been pressing upon it. Even the most apathetic or a-political European was ready to respond to the personal call of Myers to enter the Defence Association fold.

Myers's tour was an outstanding personal success. Whereas the Congress in its early days had enjoyed the dedicated service of able Secretaries, Hume particularly, and even in its divided, post-Surat state, still did so, Myers was in effect the first really outstanding and devoted figure to emerge in the Association since Ilbert Bill days. Certainly he and Pankridge were the first since to go out actively

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1. EDA Report 1912, 3-5.
2. Ibid., 5-6.
3. See for example account in the Englishman, 24.12.1912.

in search of support instead of sitting in the office (or the club) content with routine and the AGM, waiting for members to come in. At the 4 March 1913 meeting of the European Defence Association Myers was able to report the completed formation of a branch in Bombay, another 'well advanced' in Madras, and 'active preliminary steps' taken to form further branches in Karachi (for Sind) in Lahore (for the Punjab and Delhi) and in Cawnpore (for the United Provinces). His 'personal canvass', aided by the Pankridge visit and by a new pamphlet published by the Association to encourage membership, had resulted in an astonishing jump in membership from the 200 odd at the end of 1911 to a new figure by March 1913 of around 1,400. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the annual general meeting elected him President.[1] The dying European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association had been given 'a new lease of life'.[2]

Throughout 1913 Myers worked with a will. On 18 April of that year the new Cawnpore branch of the EDA had been set up under the chairmanship of H. Ledgard of Cooper, Allen & Co., President of the Upper India Chambers of Commerce and its representative on the UP Legislative Council. In November when Myers addressed it in the Cawnpore Chamber's hall, he could report that by the end of the year 'there would be eleven branches formed and in process of formation'. Membership, he added, 'now stood at between 2,850 and 2,900' and of the total membership 'some 60% were under Branches and 40% were from Calcutta'. Moreover the EDA's Council under the new rules would reflect these proportions with twenty two members representing the branches and seventeen Calcutta.[3] Whilst the Association did not yet, to Myers's

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1. AGM proceedings in Englishman, 5.3.1913.

2. Ibid., 6.3.1913.

3. EDA Cawnpore Branch progs. 18.4. and 25.11.1913. On 1 January 1913 membership had been 747; by the year-end it had jumped to 2,931, distributed as follows: Assam Valley-Dibrugarh 111, Bihar-Mozufferpore 189 'mostly planters', Bombay (an unsatisfactory) 206, Darjeeling 96, Delhi 63, Dooars-Jalpaiguri 146, Madras 428 ('the planting interest' was 'well represented' and 'all ... very keen'), Punjab-Lahore 114, Sind-Karachi, 117, Surma Valley-Silchar 109, United Provinces-Cawnpore 184 and Central Administration with (scattered) Associates 1,168. See Myers's remarks at Cawnpore meeting on 25 November and European Association Report 1913, 10.

mind, include among its members all 'the rank and file of the community' it included nevertheless 'the majority of the men who count'.[1] Such men in 1913 included the Association's two Vice Presidents E.C. Emerson (a leading tradesman) and N. McLeod, and, on its Council, A.L. Playfair, Sir Charles Armstrong, A.D. Jackson, W.U. Nicholas and H. Ledgard - Chairmen of the Assam Valley, Bombay, Madras, Sind and United Provinces branches and all of them Legislative Councillors. Also on the Defence Association Council was the redoubtable H.R. Irwin, the man who a few years back had been a member of the North Indian planting triumvirate which had been heard declaring that the Association should 'either ... make itself more truly representative', or risk being superseded. He was now Chairman of the Darjeeling branch of the Defence Association which had been set up following head office prompting and an address by Vice President McLeod before an extraordinary meeting of the Darjeeling Planters' Association on 9 June that year.[2]

The reconstruction of the Association and much widened membership made new administrative procedures necessary. With Pankridge unable to carry the load and accordingly resigning, Alec Marsh, an assistant with T.E. Bevan & Co. a firm of piano importers and dealers, had seized his chance to move out of the world of music and into that of politics. He was appointed the EDA's whole time Secretary with effect from 1 April 1913. Around the same time the Calcutta headquarter offices were moved, from 1 Mangoe Lane where they had been since 1897, to new accommodation located at Grosvenor House.[3] Attention continued to be given to the more regular routine matters falling within the three areas of activity

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1. Myers's remarks, Cawnpore meeting.

2. EAIDA Report 1909, 39, European Association Report 1913, 1-5, Darjeeling Planters' Association progs. 26.4. to 9.6.1913.

3. EDA Report 1912, 4, European Association Report 1913, 1-11, Thacker's 1913. In the three months between his formal resignation on 1 January and Marsh's assumption of the secretaryship Pankridge had carried on in a 'temporary acting' capacity. As for Marsh, with his residence at 1 Mangoe Lane he had been well sited to note the vacancy going!

laid down in its Prospectus,[1] but the expanded Association was also becoming more politically sophisticated. Thus for the first time two European candidates were put up for election to the Karachi Municipality 'under the inspiration' of the local Association branch and their election was welcomed; apparently corrupt practices in Legislative Council elections drew quick attention, and the right of direct address to the Government of India - a right established in Ilbert Bill days - was now reasserted.[2] It was entirely in keeping with the much more positive role of the Association that at the end of 1913 the word Defence was dropped from the title of what henceforth became the European Association.[3]

By the next annual general meeting in February 1914 when the energetic Myers[4] stepped down from the presidency to go back quietly into retirement, the eleven branched European Association had secured 'approximately 3,000' members.[5] As the Englishman had pointed out the previous March 'the hour [had] produced the man'[6] - rather late in the day perhaps, but better late than never. For as F.H. Stewart (a former President of the Association) had said in his keynote address at the St. Andrew's Day dinner in November 1913, for the non-official Europeans the 'good old days [were] gone'.[7]

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1. However, the Association's benevolent activities continued to be selective. Though interest was thus manifested in the community's hospitals and mental asylums (see European Association Report 1913, 15-20), attention to the few European criminals was conspicuous by its absence.

2. Report ibid. 1913, 13-20, 34-40.

3. The change of name to European Association (herein EA for short) was carried out at extraordinary general meetings held on 1 and 22 December 1913. For reports of meetings see Englishman 2.12. and 22.12.1913.

4. He had 'expressed his willingness to undertake public work, at Delhi and elsewhere, in connection with the [Bengal] Chamber' and had drawn up an elaborate scheme which he submitted to Government for consideration in regard to the establishment of a non-political loyalty league, to be styled King George's League. See Bengal C/Comm Cttee progs. 26.11.1912. and India Home Dept Progs. Political-Deposit, July 1914, No. 35.

5. Englishman, 24.2.1914.

6. Ibid., 6.3.1913.

7. Ibid., 1.12.1913.

Indians had made striking advances both within the administrative structure of British India and in politics outside it. Europeans had now to fight vigorously to claim their share of attention where in the past they had felt assured of the support of Government. 1914 therefore saw the European Association making the first moves to re-create a branch or agency in London, and putting its case to Government as a body now reorganised, consolidated and vastly increased in strength for direct representation upon the Imperial Legislative Council.[1] It was at this point that the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 totally unsettled the old order, in India as in the rest of the world.

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1. EA Report 1913, 42-4; 1914, 8. Government rejected the Association's request.

CHAPTER VI

THE WAR AND ITS IMPACT

'A queer sort of war', was how one Britisher in India described the First World War[1] - and indeed despite the profundity of its impact it was always a distant, unreal affair. Yet as the Moral and Material Progress Statement for 1916-17 rather obviously stated during its course, 'Indian affairs ... continue to be dominated both directly and indirectly by the war'.[2] And when it was over it was seen to have been the great 'divide between the old Imperial India of the Edwardian age and the newly self-conscious India of the twenties'.[3] Britain's economic and political power in the world had been weakened, and in India the permanence and activity of British rule brought into question.

Even by the war's start, however, the seeming changelessness of the Indian scene was visibly undergoing change. Lillian Ashby, who had grown up in the 1880s and '90s amidst 'the deep jungles' and 'primitive rural India' of Bengal and Bihar, for example, had change brought home to her by the first sight of a steel plant there, in 1914. 'That's Tata's!', as her husband explained.[4] To others it was the addition to amateur theatricals of magic lantern shows and by 1914 in the larger towns and cities of the moving pictures of the cinema which marked the shift. In the week that war broke out, Bombay's non-official community could choose their screen entertainment from among The Three Musceteers 'the Greatest Film of the Year' at the Excelsior, or Cora, the Temptress 'an Enthralling Story of Love, Mystery and Adventure', which was showing at the America-India Cinema, or the very topical 'Pathe's Grand War Film' The Curse of War at the Imperial

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1. R. Reid, Years of Change in Bengal and Assam, 29.
2. StMMPr, 1916-17, 1.
3. C. Allen ed., Plain Tales from the Raj, 12.
4. L.L. Ashby with R. Whately, My India, vii, 293 and Book I.

Cinematograph. And though the cinema had not yet displaced older entertainments in Madras to the same extent, where a Boy Scouts' 'grand open air concert' vied with stage entertainment at the Electric Theatre and Victoria Hall, in Calcutta the Elphinstone Picture Palace in Chowringhee was hoping to draw the crowds with The Mystery of the Old Mill - 'A Thrilling Detective Drama ... In 3 parts. 4000 feet long'.[1]

The changes brought about by the onset of war were, however, more sudden and widespread. By 2 August 1914 'the outlook of station polo, except in large cantonments [was] gloomy in the extreme', and Darjeeling had been rendered 'dull, deathly dull' by the dearth of men in the station: even 'before waws (sic) and rumours of war caused all those on leave to be recalled ... there were not a great many ... but now there are nothing like enough to go round', as the Pioneer reported.[2] When on 5 August the announcement that India was at war was made - thus ending the rumours which had flown around as all cables from Europe suddenly stopped - there were vociferous calls in the Press for Volunteers. Many British and Anglo-Indian men responded,[3] H.J. Abbott at the head of the Empire League conspicuously encouraging the Anglo-Indians to do so, were enlisted and quickly sent abroad.[4]

Moreover, 'within six months of the outbreak of the war eighty thousand British officers and troops and two hundred and ten thousand Indian officers and men were sent overseas'.[5] The drain thereafter continued steadily, and in February 1917 when registration of male European British subjects between the ages of sixteen and fifty was ordered, as a preliminary to conscription, the majority of the Calcutta British at any

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1. Times of India, 5.8.1914, Madras Times 4.8.1914, Englishman 1.8.1914.

2. Pioneer 1.8.1914, and 9.8.1914 giving Darjeeling correspondent's report dated 2 August.

3. Among them numbers of retired community members, answering the call for veteran Volunteers.

4. Englishman 1.8. to 13.8.1914, Times of India, 6.8.1914, Madras Times, 5, 6.8.1914.

5. Reed, 96-7.

rate decided to get their forms the first day, 'fill them in at once, and be done with it'.[1] The size and nature of the non-official community was thus drastically altered by the war.

And as in Britain, though to a lesser extent, was the social pattern altering, with women being called upon to play new roles, not only within the family which they now had to head, but outside it too.[2] Maud Diver in 1909 remarked that 'English women in India may roughly be divided into two classes - the devotees of work and the devotees of "play"'.[3] The war quickly reduced the number of the latter, blurring the distinction. The missionary ladies, the individuals with a social conscience like Annette Ackroyd (later Mrs Beveridge) or Flora Annie Steel who had worked for female education in India, and Mrs Steel in municipal work also,[4] or those semi-officials the wives of governors and viceroys and other officials who organised good works, were now joined by many others. They worked in the St John's Ambulance or Red Cross organisations, they raised funds, made and parcelled comforts for the troops, rolled bandages, or offered hospitality to the wounded and convalescent. A sprinkling of female names began to appear in the honours lists[5] and the 1917-18 Moral and Material Progress Statement publicly offered officialdom's thanks for the war efforts of the memsahibs.[6] One effort, probably not acknowledged, was that of caring for the children who would normally have gone to Britain for their education, but now stayed out in India. They too, in the Boy Scouts and

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1. Indian Planters Gazette, 10.2.1917.

2. Not all British women in India, however, forsook their old traditional role; witness the existence of an All-India Branch of the National League for Opposing Women Suffrage (founded in 1913 with a Mrs Gladys Watson as first President). See Pioneer, 1.8.1914.

3. M. Diver, The Englishwoman in India, 90.

4. See P. Barr, The Memsahibs, 156-68, Beveridge 92-3 and D. Patwardhan, A Star of India, 5-7. Mrs Beveridge was also well known for her Ilbert Bill letter and Mrs Steel for her Anglo-Indian novels.

5. See Englishman 1.1.1917, 1.1.1918, 1.1.1919. The women received such awards as the Kaiser-i-Hind Medal or the O.B.E.

6. StMMPr 1917-18, 14.

Girl Guides, were of course encouraged to play their part in the war effort, and might be found, as the Statesman records, selling fund-raising flags at garden parties.[1]

If war thus impinged upon the life of the non-official community's womenfolk and children, it did so much more drastically upon that of the men. It affected most completely those who joined up and went off to war, obviously enough. (And those enemy aliens who were interned, businessmen and missionaries alike!) But for those who remained in India it involved wartime duties as Volunteers, and increasingly heavy work loads, without the relief of home leave, as younger men went off and no replacements came out, while for husbands, as for wives, family problems became more acute. War also impinged in the sense that the regular patterns of commerce and industry were drastically distorted. Old problems, such as labour recruitment and management, or transport, remained or were exacerbated. But at a stroke some markets were closed and others opened, while as the war progressed government wartime controls came to be imposed ever more widely.[2] War also brought credit problems, inflation and currency instability, and at its end new problems of debt settlement on a vast international scale. And war also had major political consequences. The importance of India as a source of manpower and supplies, the loyalty so spontaneously expressed by the whole spectrum of Indian political figures from the Princes to the extremist nationalists,[3] made it impossible in the long term to refuse further Indian political advances towards self-government. At every point these changes necessarily affected the fortunes and futures of the non-official community.

One of the first results of entry into the war was the

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1. Statesman, 18.3.1917.

2. As Y.P. Verma, Growth of Protectionism in India, 34-5, shows, the lessons learnt during the war period were one cause of the introduction of a new protectionist fiscal policy in India from 1923.

3. 'Beyond all doubt the chief event of the year 1914 in India was the magnificent display of loyalty on the part of its peoples'. CMS Progs. 1914-15, 99.

total ban, by royal procalamation of 10 August 1914, upon trade by British subjects, at home or abroad, with enemy countries. But trade with Germany had been second only to trade with the UK, and its complete closure with that of Austro-Hungary, and a marked curtailment of trade with France and Belgium also, if a blow to certain traders, seemed an opportunity to British manufacturers - both in Britain and in India. In certain fields there was a marked stimulus to Indian production - as in iron and steel, in cotton, and very notably in indigo, and a real effort at import substitution.[1]

Overall, however, the first year of the war saw dislocation and curtailment rather than expansion or stimulus, while in 1915 Government banned the export of Indian hides and of jute and jute products to any country but Britain and imposed partial controls on cotton, wool, foodgrains, oils and various metals. In 1916 the use of India as a supply base for the Mesopotamian campaign further distorted commerce, drawing in leather, cotton and foodstuffs, as well as railway lines and rolling stock urgently needed in India itself. Inflation[2] and the gearing of all the major world economies to the need of war pushed up the prices of consumer goods, and in 1918 a poor monsoon coinciding with heavy military demands created a quite serious situation.[3] Moreover, because the Indian economy had been geared to British manufactures, it was by no means always possible to seize the opportunities for exporting, or for import substitution which were opened to India for lack of either spares or new machinery. For every industry and branch of commerce, therefore, the war created problems, even if for a few it promised golden opportunities.

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1. M.R. Hassaan, Indian Politics and the British Right 1914-1922, 62-4, 100-3.

2. The rapid growth of military expenditure, the taking over by the Indian Government of £100 million of British war loan, the raising of vastly increased revenues (a jump of forty per cent between 1916-17 and 1918-19), were responsible for this. (See StMMPr 1917-18, 68-75.)

3. B.R. Tomlinson, 'India and the British Empire, 1880-1935', Indian Economic and Social History Review, Oct.-Dec. 1975, XII, No. 4, 350-1.

This latter possibility was most sharply instanced not by iron and steel, or even jute, as might have been expected, but by indigo. From the turn of the century this industry had seemed tottering to its fall, the ground cut from under its feet by the German chemical dye industry. Research[1] had failed to produce an answer, and the promise of improved output from Java-Natal indigo seed had proved delusory.[2] The area under indigo had fallen in the four years 1908-9 to 1911-12 to only 300,000 or so acres in all India - 'a mere shadow of what it was in 1896' -, and by 1913-14 that had fallen to a mere 169,000.[3] Then came the ban on trading with the enemy, and within a month of the start of the war, as the Indian Planters Gazette recorded, 'the total stoppage of the export of synthetic indigo from Germany had already given a strong impetus to the Indian indigo market, and the prices for the natural product had shown a very considerable advance since the outbreak of the war'.[4] The revival was soon reflected firstly in an arrest of the fall and then in an increase in the acreage under indigo, which jumped in 1915-16 to 351,000.[5] Though such a state of affairs was pleasing, there was disappointment in British indigo planters' circles when, following the Government sponsored indigo conference in Delhi in February 1915, officialdom procrastinated before sending the Secretary of State its views on the advisability of supporting natural indigo against the synthetic product. Many Bihar planters had in fact been holding off in the absence of any clear-cut government support to the industry, and the planters' feeling of wariness and insecurity was intensified on learning of a tentative government scheme to establish synthetic indigo manufacture in India and of moves in England under

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1. The Agricultural Research College and Institute at Pusa became the main centre for this.
2. Indian Planters Gazette 21.2.1914.
3. Indian Planters Gazette 7.3.1914, Statistical Abstract ... 1904-05 to 1913-14., 126-7.
4. Indian Planters Gazette, 5.9.1914.
5. Statistical Abstract ... 1910-11 to 1919-20., 128-9.

Board of Trade auspices to establish 'a national dye-making industry on a large scale'.[1] British planters' caution thus led to the native growers in Madras taking the leading share in the industry's revival. In 1916-17 the 'immense impetus' given by the war climaxed at some 765,000 acres, slipping thereafter to around 700,000 acres in 1917-18, and in the next two years to 287,000 and 243,000 acres respectively. In this great curve of revival and decline Bihar's share was a modest one - 63,000 acres in 1913-14, 87,000 in 1917-18, 57,000 in 1919-20.[2] This restrained showing was understandable. Men who had moved from indigo into tobacco, especially after 1910 when a high import duty had been imposed by the Indian Government,[3] or into sugar,[4] were not going to rush back into indigo while government was lukewarm in support.

There was another factor constraining the European planter - the unsolved problem of labour relations and of wage levels. As far back as 1907-1908 there had been rumblings of discontent among the ryots of the Champaran district of Bihar, which had exploded in 1908 into violence on the four British indigo establishments, Pursa, Mallaya, Bairia and Kuria, leased from the Bettiah Raj Estate. The serious violence of the disturbances and the narrow escape from death at the hands of the infuriated ryots of the European planters had then led to a government investigation by W.R. Gourlay, Director of Agriculture of Bengal. In his Report he found the whole indigo system opposed by the local ryots: 'The price of the staple food-grain of the area, namely, Indian corn, had risen 93 per cent since 1877, while the rates paid by the planters [in the four concerns] for indigo had not increased in the same period by a single anna'.[5] The BPA naturally

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1. Indian Planters Gazette 13.2., 27.2., 6.3., 24.4., 14.8.1915.

2. Indian Planters Gazette 3.3.1917, 5.1.1918, Statistical Abstract ... 1910-11 to 1919-20., 128-9, Bihar and Orissa Admin. Report, 1913-14, 60, ibid. 1917-18, 53, ibid., 1919-20, 47.

3. Capital, 20.9.1918.

4. See J.A. Sweeney, Final Report on the Survey and Settlement Operations (Revision) in the District of Champaran (1913-1919), 8.9. In 1920 ten of the twenty two sugar factories in India were in Bihar. Report of the Indian Sugar Committee 1920, appendix IV.

5. India Home Dept. Progs. Police, June-Dec. 1910, vol. 8447, 966.

disputed the Report's findings, but planting representatives had to attend two conferences with the Bengal Government at Bankipur in December 1909 and at Darjeeling in May 1910 to thrash the matter out. The BPA defended as firmly as it could against strong Government pressure, and the four particular concerns were quickly made to raise their payments to ryots to the rates generally paid by BPA members. But Government found that the BPA itself had last revised its rates in 1897, since when food prices had risen steadily. Though the Association argued that a depressed industry could pay no more, Government compelled it to put up its payments by 12½ per cent and to make other concessions to the ryots, the principal one being a reduction in the maximum area a contract ryot had to sow to indigo from $\frac{3}{20}$ to $\frac{1}{10}$ of his holding.[1]

This last proviso makes clear that indigo was not a remunerative crop, that there was an element of coercion involved in the industry, even if only an unscrupulous use of the ryots' need for credit. This perhaps explains the odd contrast to be noted between the open-handed hospitality proverbial among the planting community[2] and the way in which BPA meetings went into closed and secret session whenever local ryoti affairs were discussed. Against Government, secrecy was an unusable instrument, as was force. But the unsophisticated, illiterate ryot could still be hoodwinked. Faced by narrowing margins, especially after Government's intervention, many Bihar planters had magnanimously allowed their ryots to escape from their obligations to grow indigo in the unfinished term of their contracts upon a compensation payment. In permanent lease villages the compensation, called Sharahbeshi, took the form of a rent enhancement (usually around sixty per cent) which the ryot paid to the planter or his concern, whilst if the ryot holding was in a temporary lease village the ryots paid tawan (a lump-sum payment) instead for the privilege of being so released. The Indian

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1. Sweeney 18-21, Bengal Admin. Report 1909-10, vi. India Home Dept. Progs. Police, June 1910, A nos. 129-37. The planting representatives attending the conference had included Rowland Hudson (in place of W. Cox the BPA chairman), Filgate the General Secretary, and the Secretaries of the BPA district associations.

2. See, for example, Reid 22-3.

Planters Gazette derided the practice as short-sighted from the planters' point of view and was not slow to adopt an 'I told you so' attitude when the War brought the industry's revival.[1]

These practices came under scrutiny when records of right were prepared as part of the survey and settlement operations begun in 1913 in the Champaran district, which reached Bettiah in the 1914-15 season. This settlement allowed the ryots to bring their grievances to the settlement officials who found that illegal abwabs or unauthorised dues were being collected on a large scale. Survey work in the Motihari sub-district in 1915-16 found the ryots taking the opportunity to seek to have their Sharahbeshi enhancements declared illegal too. Moreover resentment against the Bihar planters also led the ryots to appeal for outside support, so that ryoti representatives were sent to the Chapra Provincial Congress of 1915 and the All-India congress at Lucknow in 1916.[2] Their call for support there fell on attentive ears. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, newly back in India and restrained from direct political activity by his guru Gokhale, had his attention drawn to 'the stain of indigo' at the Lucknow Congress by the Bihari Rajkumar Shukla. Early in 1917 as Gandhi began his public activity by a speaking tour urging the abolition of indentured emigration, he was persuaded by Shukla to visit Champaran on his tour.[3] It was thus that on 9 April Gandhi, travelling from Patna by the evening train, 'came at midnight to Muzaffarpur'. Those Indians closely associated with Gandhi in his Champaran campaign - such as professors J.B. Kripalani or N.R. Malkani, or the lawyers Rajendra and Ramnavami Prasad - considered themselves to have been privileged to be in at the start of Gandhi's political career. By contrast the BPA Secretary, James Wilson,[4] who met Gandhi soon after his arrival, felt no

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1. Sweeney, 21-2, Indian Planters Gazette, 4.4.1914, 12.9.1914.
2. Sweeney, 22-3.
3. M.K. Gandhi, An Autobiography, 319, 333-8.
4. J.M. Wilson, who had been the BPA's Vice Chairman and Secretary of its Muzaffarpur district branch, took over as General Secretary from Filgate in 1916 when the latter became adjutant of the Bihar Light Horse. Indian Planters Gazette, 29.1.1916.

such elation, and gave him 'no encouragement'.[1] But to the ryots his presence and interest was a support which led to violent anti-planter outburst, abuse, refusal of rents, the burning down of factory buildings. As the 1913-1919 Champaran Settlement Report noted, 'the accumulated trouble of 40 years was brought to a head'.[2] But the dramatic nature of the episode, its individual drama, should not obscure the role of the war in that culmination. Judith Brown draws attention to the rise in prices which had occurred in the area by 1917, and to the hardships imposed upon this isolated district by the failure of the railway system through which the agricultural surplus was exported from the district: as one official put it, 'Everything the cultivator had to sell, rice, oil-seeds or gur, had either fallen or at least not risen in price, while everything he had to buy, cloths, salt, kerosene, had become extremely expensive'.[3] Even the new opportunity provided by the exclusion of chemical dyes had not made indigo sufficiently profitable to make it an attractive crop to the ryot under wartime conditions.

Under pressure from the Government of India, the local Government set up a Champaran Enquiry Committee on 10 June 1917, with the BPA's representative D.J. Reid as a planter counterweight to Gandhi's membership.[4] The Committee's recommendations, to which it had induced the Champaran planters to agree, were reported in October, and their main points brought as a Bill before the Bihar Legislative Council in November 1917. Despite a hard kept-up fight by the BPA, and the rallying to their compatriots' aid of the European Association, and of other planters, such as those in Darjeeling, and despite some sympathetic publicity for the Bihar planters'

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1. H.R. Ghosal ed., Diamond Jubilee Souvenir [Langat Singh College Muzaffarpur], 22-31, R. Prasad, Mahatma Gandhi and Bihar Some Reminiscences, 1-30.

2. Sweeney, 23.

3. Judith M. Brown, Gandhi's Rise to Power, 60.

4. Reid, the current Chairman of the seventy strong BPA (see evidence of J.M. Wilson to the Indian Industrial Commission) had been elected by it to the local Legislative Council in 1916.

cause in the non-official British Press, not to mention the last ditch efforts of the BPA member J.V. Jameson and its legal adviser Pringle Kennedy in Council,[1] the Bill passed its last Council stage on 4 March 1918. Rejecting a twelfth hour memorial from the BPA to withhold his consent the Governor-General gave his assent to the Bill on 1 May and the Bill became law as the Champaran Agrarian Act (Act I of 1918).[2] By the Act the hated tinkathia indigo system was once and for all abolished and amendments of planter-ryot agreements in favour of the latter were laid down, by and large on the lines of the Committee's recommendations.[3] Perhaps the only minor victory for planting and zamindari interests was that government refrained from interfering with abwabs. But whereas in 1910 at the Darjeeling conference of planters and Bengal Government the former had successfully fought off a proposal to limit contracts or sattas to a seven year term, now the planters had had to fight hard to secure a three year term, and that too with the ryot contracting for a specified crop weight rather than a special area of his holding.[4]

The 1918 Act sounded the indigo planters' death-knell. The precarious balance of profitability was tipped against them, especially when prices fell with the ending of the war. There was a brief uproar within the planting community about the way the Enquiry Committee had coerced them into undue concessions.[5] D.J. Reid who had sat on the Committee

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1. Kennedy, whose wife and daughter had been killed in the Muzaffarpur bomb incident in 1908, had been co-opted onto the Council as an expert in place of Major Filgate who was unavailable due to war duties.

2. Sweeney 23-4, Bihar and Orissa (Land Revenue) Progs. A., Feb., July and Aug. 1918, vol. 10294, 1-256, D.G. Tendulkar, Gandhi in Champaran, India Home Dept. Progs. Political, July 1917, A nos.314-16, Pioneer, 9.6.1917 'Facts and Fallacies about Mr Gandhi', ibid., April-July, and Statesman 17.3.1918. For Gandhi's own account see An Autobiography chs. XIII-XIX and for some further detail, Judith Brown, ch. 3(I) and H.R. Ghosal, 'Indigo in North Bihar and Mahatma Gandhi', Ind. Hist. Cong. Progs. 1952.

3. The Sharahbeshi enhancements were thus reduced by 26 per cent (20 per cent for the Turkaulia concern) with effect from 1.10.1917. Sweeney, 24.

4. Ibid., and India Home Dept. Progs. Police, June-Dec. 1910, vol. 8447, 1049.

5. The ryots for their part were dissatisfied with the minor nature of the concessions secured for them by Gandhi.

sued W.S. Irwin of the Motihari concern over his allegation that he had only agreed to sharahbeshi abatements because Reid had concealed proposals for refunding tawan from him[1] - thereafter the only sound was of dying gasps and by 1930 a death-rattle.[2]

The fate of the major planting industry, tea, was far less theatrical, in North and South India alike. As Sir Percival Griffiths has noticed, 'the few years immediately preceding the First World War were singularly free from dramatic happenings in the Indian tea industry',[3] and the steady growth of the labour force, from 609,000 in 1913 to 704,000 in 1918 in North India,[4] indicates that the tea industry suffered no wartime set-back either. Certainly dividends remained at a most comfortable level - well over ten per cent - throughout the war years.[5]

Initially the problem which most plagued the industry was the old one, labour. Henry Cotton, the Assam Chief Commissioner in his 1900 Labour Immigration Report had been most disparaging about the industry's treatment of labour,[6] and though the Government of India discounted his views, they could not so discount the tea garden riots which broke out in 1903. J.C. Arbuthnot, an Assam Deputy Commissioner, was appointed to review conditions in the other tea districts and compare them with those in Assam, and the recommendations in his Report caused such argument that a further Commission of Enquiry was set up in 1906, consisting of three officials and H. Gordon and H.W. Milne as representatives of the Assam and Surma Valley planting interests.[7] Their recommendations,

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1. See account of his Champaran libel suit in Statesman 1.2. to 21.2.1919. Reid resigned from the BPA over the matter.
2. R.E. Swanzy, Bihar and Orissa District Gazetteers Champaran, 88, Ghosal, 'Indigo in North Bihar ...', 332.
3. The History of the Indian Tea Industry, 154.
4. ITA Reports, 1914, 273; 1919, 266.
5. Griffiths, 170.
6. See above page 156.
7. Report of the Assam Labour Enquiry Committee, 1906., 1-4, Griffiths 278, ITA Report 1906, 4.

accepted in the main by the ITA as a whole and by the ITA(L) too, were put in force piecemeal. Firstly tea planters in the various Assam districts were required to forego their existing rights under sections 118-121 and 195-6 of Act VI of 1901, which had permitted them to execute local contracts with labourers,[1] and to arrest deserting coolies without warrant, but by 'a very good exchange' as the ITA Chairman judged, were given greater freedom in recruiting by garden sardars. This change was given effect to by notification of the Eastern Bengal and Assam Government in January 1908, whilst the 'exchange' came into force that November in the Surma Valley, Kamrup and Goalpara Districts, under powers in a new Assam Labour and Emigration (Amendment) Act, Act XI of 1908.[2] In the Brahmaputra Valley, however, where planter opposition to change had been stiffer, government moved more slowly, so that the date fixed for the withdrawal of the provisions of the Act VI of 1901 there was July 1913. But because a new Labour Enticement Bill was currently under consideration by the Secretary of State, it was not until July 1915 that the 'exchange' was actually made in that region.[3]

In the same year, a further Assam Labour and Emigration (Amendment) Act, Act VIII of 1915, was brought in,[4] which abolished the system of labour contractors and their agents or arkattis, leaving recruitment by garden sardars without a rival. Although tighter controls had been imposed on contractors after the 1906 enquiry, the abolition of the system with its 'many evils' was welcomed by the ITA as 'a matter of general satisfaction'.[5] The new Act also provided for better supervision of sardari recruiting. Even before 1915

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1. The procedure had been much used in the case of free emigrants brought up to the tea districts. (In the case of time-expired labourers, of course, a contract could still be executed locally under Act XIII of 1859, but Act XII of 1920 was to reduce the maximum permitted term of such contracts to one year, over the industry's protest. See ITA Reports 1908, 5; 1919, iv.)

2. Report ... Enquiry Committee, 1906., ch. XI and ITA Report 1908, 86. See also StMMPr 1906-07, 165; 1907-8, 126-7, 1908-9, 3, 118.

3. Report ... Enquiry Committee, 1906., 109 and ITA Reports 1911, 5; 1913, 8, 9; 1914, iv.v., 1915, 3, 4. In view of continued 'poachings' of tea labour the ITA had proposed that Government bring in legislation bearing an anti-enticement effect.

4. The 1914 ITA Chairman, R. Graham of James Finlay & Co., served as an 'expert' on the Legislative Council whilst the Bill was under discussion.

5. ITA Report, 1915, 7.

the sardars of some gardens had come under the control of the Tea Districts Labour Supply Association to which the gardens belonged,[1] but this facility had been available only to a few. There had been a call therefore for the establishment of an industry 'Labour Bureau' which would supervise recruitment and 'would provide a convenient and effective machinery for dealing with abuses in connection with sirdari recruitment'.[2] Act VIII provided for just that, establishing an Assam Labour Board under the chairmanship of Major W.M. Kennedy, who had been on the 1906 Enquiry Committee. The other fifteen members were all non-officials, eight representing the ITA and ITA(L) as a whole, four the Assam and three the Surma Valley ITA branches. The Board's function was defined as 'the supervision of Local Agents, and of the recruitment, engagement and emigration to labour districts' of Indian natives. With the passing of this Act and the establishment of the Board, labour ceased to be a real difficulty during the war, once the initial frictions caused by the establishment of the Board had been eased. (The local agents were responsible both to the Board and to district officers in their role of Superintendents of Immigration.)[3]

For the first two years of the war, despite some dislocations, conditions were favourable and 1915 was recorded at the 1916 AGM of the ITA as having been one of exceptional prosperity.[4] In 1916 an export duty was imposed on tea,

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1. By 1920 the other tea labour recruitment organisations which remained in North East India were to be absorbed into this body, Griffiths, 292.

2. ITA Report, 1915, 4.

3. ITA Report 1915, 4-5; 1916, iv-v; (India) Act No. VIII of 1915 section 5, and Griffiths, 281. (If the labour supply problem was thus resolved, there was one labour feature of the wartime years that ought to have caused more disquiet than it did - the absence of any significant rise in coolie earnings in the North Indian tea gardens, in years when the cost of living was rising under the impact of war by anything up to fifty per cent. The problem ignored in the prosperous war years by the tea companies came home to roost in the depressed years immediately after the war when the necessary adjustments were hardest to bear. See Griffiths, 308-10.)

4. ITA Report 1915, ii.

despite the strong representations of the ITA and a joint conference of the ITA and the Calcutta Tea Traders' Association with Government, at which the growing impact of Java and Sumatra teas on the market was stressed. But despite this stiffening competition and the disruption of the Russian market by defeat and revolution, prices held up well, while local consumption of Indian tea also grew, thanks to the efforts of the Cess Committee, to 'certainly not less than 40 million pounds per annum'.[1] By 1917, however, physical problems - the shortage of railway rolling stock, of the tea chests normally made in Britain, of lead foil, of shipping space - became more acute, and in February 1917, when the effects of U-boat warfare became severe, Government announced that shipments to the UK would be restricted to 7,000 tons a month.[2] With production and acreage rising[3] the restriction on the principal market for tea, while freight for other markets was hard to secure, was sharply felt. When later in the year a scheme for bulk purchase of the whole UK requirement by the Food Controller was announced, there was a general welcome, since it guaranteed shipping space for the 40 per cent of the Indian and Ceylon outturn which was taken. (Some extra amounts were later accepted.) W.M. Kennedy, Chairman of the Assam Labour Board, was appointed to work the scheme as Tea Commissioner for India, and in consultation with the ITA and ITA(L) over 40 per cent of the 1917 crop and 66 per cent of the 1918 crop was successfully handled, and at price levels which yielded a fair profit.[4] Despite some friction with officialdom, and a dispute over the settlement in rupees of Government's payments in 1918,[5] the scheme saw the industry safely through the war period. The abandonment of the control

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1. ITA Report 1916, 17-18, 1917, iii-iv.
2. Ibid. 1916, ii; 1917, ii; Griffiths 171.
3. Northern Indian totals by 1916 had reached 339 million lbs and 575,000 acres. Report ibid. 1917, 259. (In the next three years production held steady between 340-350 million lbs on a slightly increased acreage.)
4. ITA Reports 1917, ii-iii, 1918, 3-4.
5. Ibid. 1918, iv; 1919, 4-5, see also Griffiths, 172-3.

scheme at the war's end meant that the industry lost the protection of Government in the fight for export shipping space, but a freight rationing system was put into operation so that 1919-20 saw the United Kingdom taking 88 per cent of India's tea production.[1] (In Britain of course, the ITA(L) under its Secretary W.H. Pease had been keeping close watch on Indian tea interests in the quinquennium from 1914, protesting to Government on occasion - as in regard to the Indian export duty on tea imposed in 1916 - and being active in such as freight agreement renewals and, as seen, in the arrangements of the bulk purchase scheme.)[2]

The setting up of the Assam Labour Board, the working of the bulk purchase scheme, the allocation of freight, or the discussion of coolie enticement within the industry at a special Calcutta conference in 1918 as preliminary to tighter Government control,[3] all these involved the industry as a whole rather than individual districts. They emphasised the role of the ITA as opposed to the branches, even though the latter received recognition in the membership of the Board and were invited, with the ITA, to the yearly conferences called by the Assam administration.[4] There was therefore a renewed effort by the ITA to bring the branches, which represented old independent planting associations, more closely into line by harnessing their constitutions with those of the ITA in a general reconstruction scheme which would ensure greater co-ordination. But though the Calcutta tea agency houses were generally agreeable to the idea, the local bodies, clinging fiercely to their independence, rejected it.[5] War might have emphasized the value of co-ordination, but the local branches had a vitality and viability as individual units which precluded absorption. The Surma Valley Branch, with such notable leaders

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1. ITA Report 1919, ii; 1921, 308.
2. See ITA(L) Reports 1915-16, 1918-19, 1920-21.
3. ITA Report 1918, v.
4. Ibid. 1914, 3; 1915, 2.
5. Ibid. 1915, 3; 1918, viii-ix.

as R. St. J. Hickman and H.B. Fox, itself had a membership of 160 and individual representation on Local Boards and Legislative Councils. The Dooars Planters' Association, led by W.L. Travers, was little smaller with 114 garden members in 1919 and 105,000 acres of tea, and it was certainly active - witness its annual wartime reports which varied from a low of 300 or so pages to a huge 650. Nor was the Darjeeling Association under the dominating leadership of H.R. Irwin readier to lose its identity, which attracted steady newspaper publicity, or the Assam Valley planters who had a special War Relief Fund of their own.[1] (The same was true of the Terai, Dehra Dun and Kangra Associations.) The temporary impact of war conditions was not sufficient to counter the local pride of the Associations.

As for the ITA itself, which continued to overwhelmingly dominate tea in the North,[2] it continued to be an almost exclusively British organization, only a few Indian members being admitted and the odd representative of the native Indian Tea Planters Association occasionally appearing at one of its annual meetings. Out of a total investment in the Indian tea industry in 1920 of 346 million rupees, the capital investment by Britian-registered companies stood at 272 million,[3] and British controlled companies registered in India were a considerable element in the remaining 74 million.[4] The grip which the British, with the Scots well to the fore, had upon the tea industry was thus still almost complete. The major Calcutta agency houses were in turn the dominating force within the industry, and their representatives shared the ITA committee places turn and turn about.[5] As an example may be

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1. ITA Reports 1917, 54, 60; 1919, 68-70; Dooars Planters' Association Reports 1914-1919, Indian Planters Gazette 19.6.1915.

2. In 1919 of the 600,000 acres under tea in the North the ITA represented some 480,000. ITA Reports 1919, ii; 1920, 372.

3. The rupee equivalent of some £18.2 million.

4. ITA Report 1921, 313. See also Bagchi, 197.

5. Men from James Finlay, Begg, Dunlop (twice), Williamson Magor (twice) and Balmer, Lawrie held the chairmanship of the ITA between 1914 and 1919.

taken the firm of James Finlay, which provided 27,000 out of the ITA's subscription income in 1920 of 190,000 rupees, and at 6 annas an acre, thus represented 72,000 acres of tea. There followed at about two thirds of that level the firms of Octavius Steel, Duncan Bros., and Williamson, Magor and at half, McLeod and then Begg, Dunlop. Macneill, Balmer, Lawrie and Shaw, Wallace filled the seventh to ninth places, and Planters' Stores and Agency with an 8,900 rupees subscription made up the tenth place.[1] Compared with any of these houses, the non-ITA European and Indian tea gardens were insignificant indeed.

In the South UPASI was a considerable force, but the whole of its tea interests were little more than those of the single house of James Finlay in the North, for just before the war even the total South Indian tea acreage was only some 64,000 and in 1919 about 85,000 acres. (For Burma as a whole the figure was some 2,000 acres!)[2] Likewise the 76,000 employees of the southern tea industry in 1918 scarcely compared with the 704,000 in the North.[3] But as its 1919 Report emphasised, tea (72,000 acres at the time) formed only part of the UPASI empire and in that year it represented another 94,000 acres under rubber, coffee, cinchona and cardamoms, with a little pepper too.[4] In the South Indian economy therefore UPASI was a major force indeed, and its growing influence and status was reflected in the seniority of the government officials who addressed and consulted it and in the list of visitors it received in the war years. However its membership

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1. ITA Report 1920, 30, 60. Jardine, Skinner, less important in tea than formerly were twelfth, and Andrew Yule thirteenth. (Tea of course was but one field of interest for the British Managing Agencies. As Bagchi 176-7 notes, in 1911 six houses, namely Yule, Begg, Dunlop, Shaw, Wallace, Williamson, Magor, Duncan and Steel, then controlled not only 61 per cent of the Indian registered tea companies but also, together with Bird & Co., 55 and 46 per cent of the Indian registered jute and coal companies.)

2. ITA Report 1914, 285; 1920, 372.

3. Ibid. 1919, 266. (The following year the disparity was even more marked, 80,000 as against 890,000 - famine and disease causing a large flow of emigrants to the North Indian tea gardens. Ibid. 1919, iii; 1920, 382.) Its huge labour force made the tea industry the largest organised sector of private employment in India as the 1921 Census revealed.

4. UPASI Report, 1919, 3.

was still overwhelmingly individual rather than firm based as in the North.[1]

It differed in pattern by being far less dominated by the metropolitan city, operating from two centres Bangalore and Madras, where it had offices in South Parade and Parry's Buildings respectively, and holding its annual general meetings in Bangalore, except in the Silver Jubilee Year of 1918 when it met in Madras. (From 1920 when Fletcher Morton was succeeded as the Association's Secretary by H. Waddington of Coimbatore, the Bangalore joint office was transferred to Coimbatore.) In 1914 there were thirteen planter associations affiliated to it, and with some slight change in composition, fourteen in 1920.[2] It was ahead of the North, however, in already having its own Labour Department as early as 1914. This worked actively and well, both in recruiting - by the 1915 AGM it was reported '1,043 villages were searched for new connections' - and in settling inter-gardens disputes over coolies.[3] Labour was not a problem for UPASI, therefore, in the way it was for the ITA.

Naturally the impact of the war on UPASI shared many of the features already noted in relation to the northern tea gardens. British planters showed the same eagerness to enlist for active service, so that by 1916 nearly two hundred had joined up and seventeen had already 'given their lives for the Empire'. Of those who stayed many had joined the Volunteers, in such units as the Nilgiri or Malabar Volunteer Rifles.[4] The same burdens of working short handed, without home leave, were therefore experienced in South India. There was a short period after the opening of the war of difficulties with obtaining credit, but by the 1915 AGM, UPASI members had 'got used to the war' so to speak. Indeed they contributed handsomely to Government War Funds. There was a period of witch hunting of enemy aliens, and from 1916 the shortage of

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1. UPASI Reports 1914-1919.

2. Ibid. 1914-1920. UPASI district associations in 1920 were: Anamalai, Bababudin, Central and South Travancore, Coorg, Kanan Devan, West Coast, Nilgiri, Wynaad, Nilgiri-Wynaad, North and South Mysore, Shevaroy and Mundakayam.

3. UPASI Report 1915, 12-13.

4. Ibid. 1916, 13. See also Speer, 438.

shipping and high cost of freight made themselves felt. In that year a 'large and influential coffee planters' conference was held at the UPASI offices and the Association voiced a vehement protest against an increase in coffee import duties in Britain. (The protest was even louder the next year when import of coffee into the United Kingdom was severely restricted.) In 1917 in Madras as in Calcutta the loss of allied shipping meant that 'tonnage has been scarce and freight enormously increased' so that the introduction of the Government bulk tea purchase scheme came as something of a relief.[1]

Relations with Government were nevertheless good. With some financial participation by UPASI, the Madras Government agreed to run a reorganised Scientific Department for the Association, with various agricultural stations, which UPASI thought a good bargain,[2] and the Madras Exhibition of December-January 1915-16 provided an excellent showcase for its members.[3] UPASI was also extending its horizons: UPASI members with rubber interests - 41,000 acres by 1919, not far short of coffee at some 50,000 - came to be represented from 1915 in the South Indian branch of the Rubber Growers' Association,[4] and in 1917 UPASI affiliated with the Empire Producers Association. At the same time UPASI representatives in the Indian Tea Cess Committee, and in the Madras Legislative Council - till 1919 (Sir) E.F. Barber and thereafter J.A. Richardson (UPASI Chairman, 1914-15)[5] - had been active

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1. UPASI Report 1915, 3-103; 1916, 13-108, 1917, 4-5.

2. Ibid. 1915, 3-36. (Though the War delayed the reorganisation Government continued to support the existing department.)

3. Ibid. 1916, 14, 17, Madras Admin. Report 1915-16, 57.

4. The Rubber Growers' Association was a London body founded in 1907. When UPASI had joined this in 1915 it was asked to set up a branch committee in South India. Planting Directory of Southern India (1924), 127-8, UPASI Report 1915, 82-4. (In Burma the Lower Burma Planters' Association, aware of the South Indian developments in rubber, negotiated with Government considerably to extent its cultivation there. Indian Planters Gazette, 12.1.1918. As Buchanan, 73, notes, the war period, when better prices were offered, encouraged the development of the industry so that the planted area of rubber in Burma and South India reached 118,000 acres by 1919.)

5. Richardson was followed as Chairman by C.H. Brown (1915-16), and from 1916 to 1919 by J.S. Nichols, a prominent Nilgiris planter.

in airing the wartime problems of the Association's members. At the Silver Jubilee Meeting at Madras in August 1918, graced by the presence of the Governor, it was also announced that a South Indian Association had now been formed in London.[1] The increase of its representation in Chambers of Commerce - from 1919 the UPASI was not only represented in the London Chamber but also in that of Mysore and had an honorary Member representation in the Madras Chamber - was further evidence of the widening of its outlook by the united planters' body.[2]

And whereas in North India plans for reconstructing the ITA and its branches had failed to materialise, in 1918 UPASI pushed through as the 'most urgent and important business' of its annual meeting a reorganisation of its own structure, which by 1919 was already in operation. The new scheme provided for a new style Executive Committee comprising the Chairman and Planting Member ex officio, joined by three members elected by its General Committee (one each for tea, rubber and coffee) with each of the last-named having a 'member in waiting'. The Association's General Committee was to consist of the five members already mentioned, but not the waiting members, plus two representatives nominated by each District Association. The reorganized structure was ably handled in its formalities by Messrs King and Partridge the UPASI's solicitors. The change was marred slightly, however, when the Shevaroy Planters Association declined to join in with the new scheme as the other affiliated planters' associations had done.[3] If this absence was regretted,[4] in compensation it was possible to welcome the effective establishment of the South Indian Association in London. Within a year this had already

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1. The Association, which had offices in Mincing Lane, had been founded on 24 January 1918 to promote the interests of South Indian 'planting, mercantile and industrial businesses', alone or in co-operation with bodies such as UPASI.

2. UPASI Reports 1914-1920.

3. Ibid. 1918 and 1919.

4. It turned out, however, only to be temporary as the Shevaroy Association rejoined UPASI in the year 1919-20.

secured a membership representation of tea, 58,934 acres, rubber 29,585 and coffee 6,843[1] - a very vigorous start indeed. If the return of peace brought new problems - a high rate of exchange, uncertain markets, disorganised steamer freight patterns - as well as the need to review educational, medical, housing and welfare policies for the large labour force on UPASI plantations,[2] at least UPASI as an organisation was in good trim for dealing with them.

The progress of the jute industry in India throughout the war years was much more akin to that experienced by tea and coffee than to the traumatic pattern of indigo. By 1914 the industry, controlled by British agency houses in Calcutta, was in a very satisfactory condition indeed. 'The Great War' as has been noted, 'brought tremendous prosperity to the jute mills, trench warfare resulting in a collossal demand for sandbags, while wrappers and packing materials were required for the transport of huge quantities of material stores'. Such was the weight of wartime demand for jute that 'it became necessary for the Government of India to relax certain provisions of the Factory Acts in order to enable the mills to keep up the supply'.[3]

The 218,000 hands employed in the country's jute mills in 1914, moreover, grew in the first year of the war to 234,000. And though the IJMA report for 1915 made a perfunctory reference to low prices, it emphasised that the industry had successfully handled 'Government requirements of War bags' and that the year had been 'one of prosperity to the trade'.[4] Over the next two years, despite the difficulties in obtaining machinery from a manufacturing world geared to

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1. UPASI Report 1919, 9.

2. Ibid., 17-91. In 1920 the South Indian tea labour force was 77,000, whilst a further 40,000 worked on coffee and 17,000 on rubber plantations. (See ITA Report 1921, 312 and J.T. Marten, Census of India, 1921, India Part 1.- Report, facing 265.) UPASI labour comprised the large bulk of this force.

3. 'Jute -- from John Company's Days', Capital supplement, 3.11.1938. See also T.B. Desai, Economic History of India under the British, 119.

4. IJMA Report 1915, ii, 18.

war the number of looms and spindles did rise and as early as 1916 the industry was supplying fifty million sandbags a month.[1] Though freight was an increasing problem, with a ratio of net profits to paid-up capital as high, on official calculations, as 75 per cent, Chairman Archy Birkmyre's assessment at the IJMA annual general meeting in January 1917 that the industry had 'managed to struggle along' in 1916 must be set down as an example of pawky Scottish humour.[2] In 1917 Government orders were temporarily suspended, there being surplus supply in hand and a dire shortage of shipping in consequence of German submarine activity. But the industry, in accordance with well established precedent, demonstrated its internal discipline by reducing working time to 67½ hours a week (5 days of 13½ hours) until it could resume full-time working from March 1918.[3] For part of December of that year and of January 1919, due to 'the signing of the Armistice and the continued uncertainty as to the intentions of the USA Government', there was a new cut to only four days a week, but the industry was briefly back to a five day week till the end of March, before returning to the four day week for the rest of the year. The cuts in the working week did not, however, indicate any real depression in the jute industry, rather an efficient and prudent policy of maximising profitability by preventing overproduction. (Indeed 1918 had been the busiest in the IJMA's thirty five years existence as its Chairman A.R. Murray of Thomas Duff & Co. recorded.) In any case by January 1920 five day working was resumed and by April the IJMA members were happily back to a full-time six day week in the mills they operated.[4] There was little movement either towards shortening the long working week, however, and until the end of the war there was little advance in wages, which did not keep pace with the cost of living, though there

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1. Sen, 50.

2. IJMA Report 1916, ii, D.R. Gadgil, The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times, 1860-1939, 269.

3. IJMA Report 1917, 7, 8, and 'Jute -- from John Company's Days'.

4. IJMA Report 1918, iii, v, 9; 1920, iii, 16.

was a marked jump in 1920 and 1921,[1] perhaps in consequence of the wave of strikes at the end of 1919.[2]

During the war years the IJMA Council had studied methods of increasing the jute crop, and had submitted its suggestions upon the improvement of working conditions, and labour housing, to the Indian Industrial Commission appointed in May 1916 under Sir Thomas Holland's presidency 'to examine and report upon the possibilities of further industrial development in India'. (Sir F.M. Stewart (of Gladstone, Wyllie & Co.), the President of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, was a member of the Commission which stressed the lagging development revealed by the war and the need for Government to play an active part in industrial development.)[3] Its Chairman had also sat in upon the Bengal Chamber's subcommittees which were examining the Public Service Commission's recommendations,[4] more specifically on the subcommittees dealing with the government Agricultural Services and the Factory and Boiler Inspection Departments.[5]

By 1919 it could be seen then that the IJMA had been active as an organisation, successful in organising output, and that the industry had earned not only the thanks of government[6] for its good war work, but handsome and sustained profits into the bargain. There had been moreover a steady expansion, from 64 mills at the start of the war to 73 by its end, and a rise to 272,000 hands employed in 1919.[7] The

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1. Buchanan, 355.

2. The interest which the Association was taking in 1920-1 in the proposals for the formation of a Federation of Employers in India was probably another consequence. See IJMA Report 1920, iv.

3. See IJMA Report 1917, vii, 1919, 7 and Report of the Commission given in P.P. 1919, XVII, [Cmd. 51.].

4. After touring India in 1912-13 the Public Service Commission continued its work in England, issuing its final report in 1916.

5. IJMA Report 1919, 17.

6. Publicly recognised by the Commander-in-Chief in India and the Controller (Jute Manufactures), IJMA Report 1918, iii.

7. Desai 119, IJMA Report 1919, 17.

industry remained completely British controlled and virtually all within the Association's fold.[1] The dominance of a few major Managing Agencies was very marked: in 1920 Bird & Co. with 5,950 looms, Thomas Duff & Co. with some 4,700 and Andrew Yule about 3,900 between them controlled over a third of the total number of looms at work in the industry.[2] There were also some very powerful firms on the marketing side of the industry, in such as the Calcutta Baled Jute Association, and in the newer European Jute Dealers Association,[3] affiliated to the Bengal Chamber in 1915. Ralli Brothers, for example, of the former Association, in 1920 shipped some 47 million jute bags, while Gillanders, Arbuthnot leaders on the other side of the export business, shipped some 175 million yards of jute cloth.[4]

The fortunes of India's other great mill industry, cotton, shared many of the same features in the war and immediate post-war years as jute. There was hesitation and uncertainty, both in terms of markets and credit in the second half of 1914. The rising prices of mill stores and procurement difficulties had some dampening effect in 1915 and kept profit margins down. Then came the breakthrough. With cotton imports restricted, 1916 was noted as 'a year of unmixed prosperity, especially for the producers of cloth'. Indeed, 'the most important contribution to the mill industry that the war years made was the stepping up of the rate of cloth output', which aided by imports of Japanese and Chinese yarn

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1. See IJMA Report 1920, 229. Reflecting the expansion in the industry, the IJMA's membership had increased from 44 in 1914 to 47 in 1920 and its loomage from 37,600 to 40,500. Ibid., 1914, 32-5 and 1919, 28-31.

2. Ibid., 1919, 28-31. Duff's manager (Sir) A.R. Murray served as a Chairman of the IJMA from 1916-1918. He also served on the Bengal Legislative Council and represented the employers of factory labour in India at the International Labour Conference in Washington in October 1919.

3. A body of loose jute dealers. By 1918 this was restyled as the Calcutta Jute Dealers' Association.

4. IJMA Report 1915, 18; 1920, 241.

rose from 1,164 million in 1913-14 to 1,732 million yards in 1921-22.[1] Though no new mills were built during the war, and the number of spindles even fell, there was a twenty per cent increase in the number of looms installed and the switch from yarn to cloth production, begun earlier, was carried much further, and much of the home market was captured.[2] At the same time, Government having appointed a Cloth Controller, large and increasing quantities of cloth were purchased for war purposes by Government, at a fixed profit mark-up: the rounded figures of purchases, in rupees, being 13 lakhs in 1914-15, 15 lakhs in 1916-17, 22 lakhs in 1917-18, 30 lakhs in 1918-19 and, after a stumble in 1919-20, 36 lakhs in 1920-21.[3] The prosperous years of 1917 and 1918 were thus followed by even better years in 1919 and 1920, when a boom situation prevailed. Near the end of that last year approaching 300 spinning and weaving mills were at work in India, employing some 350,000 workers, and backed up by another 83,000 or so workers engaged in cotton ginning and pressing.[4]

In the cotton industry Europeans appeared however as junior partners only. In the west of India, cotton's heartland, Europeans were still the dominant element in international trade and so controlled the Bombay Cotton Trade Association.[5] But within the Bombay Mill-owners' Association the pattern was sharply reversed, there being seven Europeans on its committee and fourteen Indians in 1911, and six and fifteen in 1920.[6] In Ahmedabad, Bombay's closest rival, Indian dominance was even more complete.[7] In the Madras

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1. Saklatvala 32-5, Mehta 146-7, 154.
2. Buchanan, 201, 214.
3. Saklatvala 35, Sen 62.
4. Saklatvala 36, Mehta 233, Census of India, 1921, I ... Report, facing 265.
5. There was still a significant European presence on the Bombay Cotton Exchange, and in the service side of the industry dealing with machinery and factory equipment. See Dantwala 66, and Thacker's 1919, Bombay Commercial section.
6. Saklatvala, 70.
7. Thacker's 1919, section on Cotton mills, Bombay Presidency.

Presidency the Binny owned Buckingham and Carnatic Mills - suppliers of millions of yards of khaki drill to the Allied Armies in the Middle East - continued to outclass all competitors, in Coimbatore, Tuticorin and elsewhere, and there were still some European cotton pressing and ginning companies.[1] But it was in Cawnpore only that European mill ownership predominated, with four great mills. Together with some European interest on the ancillary side, the group enjoyed a wartime boom - '50,000 tents have been manufactured since war began', it was reported in 1918[2] - and excellent profits. Through the Upper India Chamber the mill interests were well represented, as before the Indian Cotton Committee whose report came out in 1919,[3] and indeed, in the war years the ties were particularly close: B.R. Biscoe of the Elgin Mills was Vice President of the Chamber in 1916, Thomas Smith of the Muir Mills, member of the UP Legislative Council, was President from 1918 to 1920, while C. O'Malley and A.A. Black of the Cawnpore and Victoria Mills respectively served on the Chamber's committees.[4]

Wool, Cawnpore's other mill industry, and its leather works, did well during the war years as might have been expected, though in each case very heavy purchases in the first year were not matched in later years, despite the demand for uniforms and every sort of harness from the Army.[5] Cooper, Allen, the biggest name in the latter field, provided H. Ledgard and L.P. Watson who were either President or Joint President of the Upper India Chamber from 1912 to 1917,[6] while A.W. Lilley of the Cawnpore Woollen Mills was active on its

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1. DeSouza 89, 103, 176, Hayles, 59.

2. Upper India C/Comm Report 1917, xi, giving President's remarks at February 1918 AGM.

3. Ibid. 1917, ix, 1920, vii. The Cotton Committee had been formed in September 1917 and had made two extensive tours of India gathering evidence.

4. Ibid. 1915-1920.

5. Sen, 38-9.

6. Both men represented the Chamber in the UP Council and were knighted.

committees. The Chamber was thus closely involved in the wartime problems of both industries.

The same was true of sugar - T.D. Edelston of the Cawnpore Sugar Works serving on the Chamber's committees and providing expert advice, and the India Sugar Producers' Association, founded in 1911, affiliating with the Chamber and sharing with it from 1912 the services of its Secretary J.R. Ryan.[1] (Cawnpore was the natural sugar centre and principal Indian market with the research station at Pusa close at hand, over half the country's sugar-cane acreage within the UP in 1920 and 15 out of the 22 sugar factories then in India located in the UP and Bihar, many established by Europeans who had gone from indigo into sugar.) The co-option of A.J. Shakespeare, ex-Secretary of the Upper India Chamber, a Begg, Sutherland man, to the Indian Sugar Committee in 1920 demonstrated the importance of Cawnpore in that industry[2] - and strengthened its voice.[3]

Underlying the success of all the industries so far considered but providing major headaches to them also, were the coalmines and the railways.[4] The problem of the latter,

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1. Upper India C/Comm Reports 1912-1918 and 1919, 21-2.

2. StMMPr 1921, 155, Report of the Indian Sugar Committee 1920, appendix IV, Upper India Chamber of Commerce Cawnpore 1888-1938, 41. By 1918-19 2.82 million acres were under sugar-cane in India, nearly half of the world's acreage. Notwithstanding, India remained unable to satisfy its own requirements and accordingly had to import large quantities of sugar at very high prices. Government set up the Sugar Committee to investigate the possibilities of reorganising and developing the country's sugar industry. StMMPr 1919, 88, 108. For a review of the growth of India's sugar industry, see Bagchi, ch. 12.

3. Other European concerns - the Delhi flour mills, the Burma lumbering, saw-mill and petroleum firms, or the breweries, also prospered during the war, but perhaps require no detailed study here.

4. By 1920 railway mileage reached 37,000, 73 per cent owned by Government, 12 per cent by Indian states and the rest privately. European management, however, still operated some 70 per cent of the system, and was reviewed in 1920-21 by an Indian Railway Committee under Sir William Acworth. Sahni 24-5 and StMMPr 1921, 184.

overworked, inadequately supplied with replacements, and with rails and rolling stock carried off to the war zones such as Mesopotamia, have already been touched on.[1] Competition for wagon space would be one of the most pressing concerns of every firm and industry - and to none more than the coal industry which had to make good the loss of imports of coal from Britain and other areas and feed the expanding mill and plantation industries.

For coal therefore the war was an extremely difficult time. Indeed, for the Bengal Coal Company, the premier British entrepreneur in an industry which was two thirds under European control,[2] 'the First World War was a continuous ordeal'.[3] Coal was so important a wartime necessity that it was almost inevitable that Government should at some point apply controls. With powers derived from the Defence of India Act, the Government set up a coal supplies regulation committee in December 1916 and appointed a Controller for India in 1917.[4] These may seem rather late dates for action - they

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1. On the labour side the influence of European railwaymen in India was to be felt in their own, communal section of the railwaymen's trade union movement which was gathering strength at the end of the war. Following the Atkins period an Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants had been formed in 1897 with an ex-guard, J.A. Balfour, as its Secretary and with a membership limited in practice to Europeans and Anglo-Indians. Though they joined with Indian railwaymen in pay protest meetings - see for example the mass meeting at Jhansi reported in the Rangoon Times (weekly) of 21 February 1920, 'the division of the movement on ... communal and racial grounds' was soon reasserted . See M.K. Mast, Trade Union Movement in Indian Railways, 8, 23, and K.S. Sivaraman, Strikes in Indian Railways:- A Flash Back, 1.

2. The Indian Mining Federation which had been formed in 1913 to represent Indian interests in the industry was acting in 1920 for interests controlling 'over one-third' of India's coal output. Golden Jubilee Souvenir 1913-1963, 42. In 1908 a Central Provinces and Berar Mining Association had also been formed. With but 16 members and a labour force of 17,000 in 1919 (See P.P. 1919, XVI, 713), its weight was only marginal.

3. Paris et al., 109.

4. Golden Jubilee Souvenir ..., 36, IMA Report 1917, 3. The three-part Government controls in the coal industry related to: (1) coal requisition, (2) restriction on opening of collieries, (3) restriction on coal raising and despatch.

indicate, in fact, that in earlier years coal had not been too serious a problem. 'We have the greatest cause to be thankful that our coal trade has suffered as little as it has done so far' the Chairman of the Indian Mining Associates, W.J. Wood of Shaw, Wallace & Co., had remarked in March 1915. Indeed the main reported causes of concern for the IMA that year seem to have been the competition from the state-owned East Indian Railway collieries and the need, set out in a memorial to the Bihar and Orissa Government, for a separate, officially recognised Jherria coalfield district with its headquarters at Dhanbad.[1] In the spring of 1916, with coal output steady at seventeen million tons, IMA members were still able to congratulate themselves that there was a market for their coal 'at more or less remunerative prices'.[2] By early 1917, however, the prospects before the industry were very much more troubled. British supplies of coal to India had almost ceased, and the flow from other sources only partially made good the deficiency.[3] This might ensure good prices and strong demand for Indian coal, but it made transport problems much more intense - India's coal being concentrated in the East. The increased demand for Indian coal, welcome in 1916 after the shutdown of a number of collieries in 1915 because large consumers could not take delivery of coal contracted for, had risen to an 'unprecedented extent' and by the end of 1916 had brought the country to the verge of crisis. B.A. White, Chairman of the IMA - and like the IMA representative in the Provincial Legislative Council, W.A. Ironside,[4] from Bird & Co. - stressed at the AGM in March 1917: 'The crying need for both coal producers and consumers at the present moment is transport'.[5] It was to deal with the old problem, made newly

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1. IMA Report 1914, iii; 1915, 11-16. The East Indian Railway had again been putting its surplus coal raisings on the open market.

2. Statistical Abstract ... 1910-11 to 1919-20., 237, IMA Report 1915, iii, remarks at 1916 AGM.

3. See Anstey, 236, Buchanan 265.

4. He had succeeded W.A. Lee on the Council.

5. IMA Report 1916, iii, iv, 26.

serious by the increased industrial and military demand, that at the end of 1916 a Coal Supplies Regulation Committee was set up (on which the IMA was represented), and in 1917 a Coal Controller (Sir) G.C. Godfrey appointed to impose Government priorities. 'Since the last Annual General Meeting', said Chairman L.E. Edwards (Andrew Yule & Co.) in March 1918, 'I think the coal trade has probably experienced a more strenuous period than has ever been known in its history'.[1]

By that date, as Edwards made clear it was not just a shortfall in railway wagons that threatened the industry - there was a new crying need for 'equipment of all descriptions', and the shortage of European staff and their increasing weariness was making colliery supervision very difficult.[2] In the following year, when the Coal Controller's requisitions were proving a headache to many colliery managements, the IMA Committee was faced with the additional burden upon its time and energy of answering the enquiries of Treharne Rees, the expert newly appointed by Government to investigate and report upon mining conditions in India. The Committee had also been concerned with giving its opinions on constitutional reform issues, on the Public Service Commission's recommendations relating to the Indian Mines Department, and on issues raised by the Industrial Commission of 1916.[3]

The War's end found the IMA, though still preoccupied with transport shortages and taxation,[4] mainly concerned with what it held to be a much too rapid abandonment by Government of its compulsory requisitioning of coal supplies, round which the marketing structure had been rebuilt. Earlier there had been impatience at restrictions, and complaints about the low prices paid for requisitioned coal, now with a record output of 22.6 million tons in 1919 'over-rapid decontrol' threatened, it was contended, 'a scramble for sales which would force down

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1. IMA Report 1917, ii, iii, 3, 4.
2. Ibid. 1917, iii.
3. Ibid. 1918 and 1919.
4. The IMA waged a successful battle to obtain concessions under the Excess Profits Duty Act of 1919.

prices to a crippling extent'. Government under IMA pressure did relent a little but only to the extent of deferring control until March 1920.[1] It may be added that with labour proving no problem - 'owing to famine, labour was very plentiful indeed' in 1919[2] - the industry in the event profited from the post-war industrial spurt and enjoyed boom conditions in the early 1920s.[3]

For the non-official engaged in trade, the war was a matter of business as usual for as long as possible, then the search for alternatives, some degree of local buying to make good falling imports - and for some war service, for others the Volunteers, and for all shortages of staff. But neither the newspaper advertisements nor the records of the Trades Associations suggest any marked break or innovation. There were still commission agents prepared to ship out goods on order from Britain,[4] mail-order catalogues from the great department stores of the port cities from which mofussil customers could order furniture, servants' uniforms or household supplies, and though numbers of familiar but alien names vanished into internment - the ranks of the watchmakers, pastrycooks and photographers must have been particularly thinned - even the smaller hill stations like Naini Tal could still muster a full complement of grocers, wine merchants, dressmakers, tailors and general drapers.

The Trades Associations continued in action, though as very local pressure groups as the Punjab Trades Association did, for example, up in Simla, with much less influence than the

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1. Paris et al., 116, [Bengal Coal Company, Ltd.], 58.

2. IMA Report 1919, iii. In the decade 1911-1921 colliery employees had increased from 143,000 to 181,000 and collieries themselves from 353 to 581, see Census of India, 1921, I ... Report, 266. Close attention to the welfare of the large mines labour force in Bihar was one of the main objects of a new Mining Settlements Bill which was passed by the Bihar Council in 1920 and whose introduction had been the result of IMA initiative. See Bihar and Orissa Leg. Cl. progs. 29.3.1920, 30.7.1920.

3. Paris et al., 117, Whitehead, 63.

4. See for example offer of London shopping services by 'Daphne' in Statesman 14.1.1917.

regional Chambers of Commerce. Even the Presidency Trades Associations' influence on public affairs was slight, and the Local Government, so Capital declared, 'felt safe in pooh-poohing' the Bombay Association's claim to representation not only in the Local Legislative Council but 'even in the Municipal Corporation'.[1] The Calcutta Trades Association was certainly the most influential body,[2] and its opinion was requested on a variety of issues and it continued to send representatives to the Bengal Legislative Council, E.B. Eden and W. H. Phelps in turn succeeding W.H. Grice.[3] Even so its range of interest was narrow - time being devoted to issues such as a Business Names Act, improvement in the postal system or the proposed income tax changes, or under its most prominent wartime Master J.H. Wiggett (1917 and 1918) of the metal merchants T.E. Thomson & Co.,[4] on plans for a post-war reconstruction of the eighty odd strong Association.[5]

It is clear that the Trades Associations did not provide - and did not aspire to provide - any but the most local and sectional leadership to the non-official European community. The same was largely true of the European members of the professions. Many of these professions had their own associations, but these were not only technical in nature,[6] but also usually mixed in composition and so, as with the Law Societies for example, had no specifically British character. Moreover even an association such as the misleadingly titled Indian Engineering Association which was British controlled, carried little weight outside its own narrow field. It is probably

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1. Capital, 7.2.1919.

2. The Rangoon Trades' Association, also very influential, flew highest socially, attracting even the Lieutenant-Governor to its dinners. See Rangoon Times (weekly) 26.1.1918.

3. Grice was awarded the C.I.E. in 1915 for his services on Council and in the Volunteer cause. CTA Report 1915, 53.

4. Wiggett's prominence had been enhanced through the strong supporting speech which he gave at an important protest meeting held at the Dalhousie Institute in September 1917 under European Association auspices. See below.

5. CTA Reports 1914-1920.

6. For instance the Association of Colliery Managers in India founded in 1915 to watch the progress of legislation affecting the profession and to communicate the profession's collective views. IMA Report 1915, v.

true, also, that within the European community professional men had lost ground as industry and commerce expanded. J.W. Langford-James and L.P.E. Pugh, leaders of that elite group the British barristers of the Calcutta High Court and advisers to the European Association, was less influential within the community than their predecessors Griffiths Evans and the senior Pugh had been in Ilbert Bill days. Most influence, as in earlier years, was wielded by the owners and editors of the British Press in India. The pre-eminent figure here was undoubtedly (Sir) Stanley Reed, Times of India editor since 1907 and adviser to the Central Publicity Board of India set up in 1918.[1] In Calcutta the other major figures were J.A. Sandbrook of the Englishman, Paul Knight of the Statesman and Shirley Tremearne and Pat Lovett of Capital; up country C.B. Rattigan and F.E. Wilkins of the Pioneer and the Civil and Military Gazette continued to act as voices of the official as well as non-official community, and Harry Abbott owner of the Indian Planters Gazette and other papers was a particularly popular figure among non-officials -/B.G. Horniman, editor of the Bombay Chronicle and Annie Besant, owner of the Madras Standard, renamed New India, were particularly unpopular.[2] Upon this influential Press the War left its impact in a number of directions. The problem of managing a newspaper with large sections of the staff away on military service was compounded by the difficulty of obtaining machinery, printing materials and supplies generally, and further exacerbated by a severe increase in the cost of newsprint. The main editorial difficulty, however, focused on the problem of censorship. If the Indian Press was criticised in not being undividedly behind the war effort through its support for the nationalist cause, what role had loyal and responsible British editors to pursue? The Times of India, for example, felt compelled to expose the grievous lack of attention to the weary and wounded survivors of the unsuccessful Mesopotamian campaign and to suggest that a

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1. Reed 106, Barns 338.

2. Thacker's 1917, Barns 335, Indian Planters Gazette 10.4. 1915 and G.W. Tyson article 'The Story of Capital' in Capital Jubilee Supplement 3.11.1938.

change in the Army command was necessary to ensure improvement - thus bringing down official wrath upon its head.[1]

The common ground on which planting, industry, trade and the professions met was commerce, and if any body spoke for the generality of the non-official Europeans it was usually the Chamber of Commerce. Such chambers, with their affiliated bodies - in 1918 the Bengal Chamber had eighteen linked Associations - stretching far up country and into every field from planting, coal, railways to banking and insurance, were natural spokesmen for their community and a channel of communication with Government. To these hard-working bodies the coming of war meant an added, heavy burden. If it wasn't controls it was aliens and their property and businesses, and if it wasn't aliens it was the Indian Defence Force Act, and if it wasn't this Act it was the War Loan, and if it wasn't the War Loan it was trade after the War and the all-India Chambers' conference on the subject at Delhi in March 1917.[2] All this came of course on top of regular work, the maintenance of internal and international connections, the furnishing of representatives for the Legislative Councils and Committees of Enquiry and the formulation of representative opinion on such issues as the structure of the Civil Service, constitutional reform or Indian industrial development.

Individual Chambers also had local or regional concerns. The more recently formed Chittagong Chamber, under the vigorous leadership of the President A.R. Leishman (of James Finlay) and Vice President A.E. Martin (of Bullock Bros.) was particularly concerned with the enforcement of port facilities, with attracting new shipping lines and with the working of the Assam-Bengal Railway on which effective exploitation of the port's hinterland in Bengal and Assam so heavily depended. In Delhi the Punjab Chamber showed itself if anything more parochial. Despite the production of reports of over 600 pages, it had nothing to say and no suggestions to offer on Government's provisional conclusions on the Public Service Commission's

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1. Barnes 335-6, Reed 100, 106. The Times received a stern warning, but an Indian newspaper it was intimated would not have escaped as lightly.

2. Bengal C/Comm Report 1917, v.

recommendations, for example.[1] Indeed, despite the fillip given by the transfer of the Capital to Delhi, membership slipped somewhat after 1913 due to 'the war and unsatisfactory trade conditions' and it was not until the latter part of the war that the fall was recovered. Thereafter there was a slight rise in numbers, to 81 in 1919.[2] Ironically a major concern of the Punjab Chamber was its own composition. Like Bombay it had tended to look down on the vociferous Europeans of Calcutta and to pride itself on its friendly attitude towards the natives. But when at this period the increase in native membership threatened European control of the Chamber[3] attitudes noticeably changed and soured. 1919, the year of the anti-Rowlatt campaign, of the Amritsar massacre and of hartal riots in Delhi itself in April, saw stiff in-fighting break out between European and Indian members of the Chamber over proposals to change its rules, with the energetic James Currie, the Chairman of the Chamber since its inception and its representative in the Punjab Legislative Council, and R.E. Grant-Govan, Currie's successor after his death early in the year, leading the struggle to ensure that 'the number of Indian members ... of the Chamber [should] not at any time exceed the number of other Members'.[4] Unlike its Delhi neighbour the Upper India Chamber of Commerce at Cawnpore was to retain a more dominant European character throughout the war years, a result to which the establishment in 1914 of a rival local Indian Chamber - the United Provinces Chamber of Commerce - no doubt contributed.[5] Vigorous as always, it ably serviced the varying interests of its members in such fields as sugar

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1. Punjab C/Comm Report 1918, 392.

2. Ibid. 1914, xxxv, 18; 1915, 1; 1916, 13-15; 1917, 315; 1919, 11-13.

3. At the end of 1917 Indian membership already stood at three sevenths of the total. Against three Indians on the ten-man Managing Committee in 1917, in 1919 the figure was nine on the Committee of thirteen. Punjab C/Comm Report 1917, 12, 315; 1918, 9.

4. Ibid. 1918, xxxiii-xxxv, Punjab C/Comm Cttee progs. 20.2. 1919, 11.3.1919.

5. Upper India C/Comm Report 1914, ii, Thacker's 1917 and 1919.

(where a diminution of imports had brought good times to the sector)[1] and in cotton, wool and leather as has been seen. Notwithstanding, though it naturally pressed its own interests in the new Legislative Reforms under review from 1917, it was somewhat out of its depth when dealing with all-India questions.

Two other Chambers, those at Karachi and Rangoon, by their geographical position were compelled to play regional rather than larger roles though in terms of the value of trade passing through their ports they stood very much on a par with Madras,[2] with which Rangoon at least vied also in political centrality. Karachi, however, was very sheltered from the political upheavals of the rest of India and experienced nothing so exciting even as the Moment case agitating the Burma Chamber in Rangoon.[3] Under the chairmanships of M. de P. Webb and W.U. Nicholas, however, Karachi struggled under wartime restrictions such as the export ban on hides, wool and wheat. More complex shipping documentation because of wartime controls added to the Chamber's labours and it was involved in the long drawn out claims against Government for the requisitioning of

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1. See remarks of President at AGMs of 1915 and 1917.

2. In value of total imports and exports (which flowed principally through the provincial capitals) the provinces of Madras, Burma and Sind stood in 1918-19 in the ratio of 37:36:35. On the same scale the Bengal: Bombay ratios were 179:157. Bengal C/Comm Report 1919, Appendices volume, 384, (figures in crores of rupees).

3. By virtue of section 41 of the Lower Burma Towns and Villages Lands Act, where a revenue official considered that Government had a better claim to a piece of land than had the person occupying it, no action could be taken in a civil court to determine a private claim to the land as against the Government. In the test case of the Secretary of State versus Moment the Privy Council held that civil courts could not be so excluded in the matter. Despite this, through a proposed amendment to the India Consolidation Act of 1915 Government was attempting in Parliament in 1916 to nullify the Privy Council decision. The Burma Chamber, seeing a controversial infringement of non-official rights at stake, drew the attention of the other European Chambers in India to the danger, and waged a vigorous protest campaign on the issue both in India and in Britain - where the important support of the East India Section of the London Chamber of Commerce brought it victory. See Feldman 136-7, Punjab C/Comm Report 1916, 23-48, Bengal C/Comm Report 1916, I, 22-3, II, 47-91, London C/Comm Report 1916, 51.

ships, and in urgent communications with Government in 1916 when the sale of Councils Bills was suspended and brought export trade 'almost ... to a standstill'. It also attended the 1918 all-India War Conference to discuss further aid to the war effort.[1] Proud of its achievements - in 1919, with a membership of 59, the Chamber had grown into 'one of the leading institutions in India' - it reacted sharply to Montagu's remark[2] that 'hitherto, the initiative in the development of India has been practically confined to the Government and its officials', deploring his evident ignorance of the facts, and showed itself more concerned with political developments than in the past. If its reaction towards the Rowlatt Acts[3] and the Indian opposition to them was conventionally European, it adopted a co-operative attitude towards the proposed constitutional reforms hoping in the process to obtain for Sind, and the Chamber, a greater representation in public affairs than formerly. (It was significant too of the Chamber's rather moderate attitude towards Indian aspirations that its Chairman Webb had been a delegate to the 1915 session of Congress - though the Chamber Committee requested him publicly to make clear that his attendance was in a private capacity.)[4] The Burma Chamber, with a slightly larger membership[5] was no less vigorous, pressing views upon the progress of the Shan States Railway, the continuing inadequacies of the Burma Chief Court and the inequity of the division of government revenues between the province and the Government of India. Though distance saved it from involvement in Indian political movements, the Chamber was already aware of the Burmese separatist movement and in 1918 voiced its disquiet at its progress.[6]

In the early years of the war, the Madras Chamber,

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1. Feldman, 131-5.
2. The Right Honourable Edwin Samuel Montagu became Secretary of State in July 1917.
3. See below.
4. Feldman, 138-40.
5. Thacker's 1918, for example, shows a membership of 67.
6. Rangoon Times 6.2.1915 and ibid. (weekly) 23.2.1918.

important locally though it may have been, still gave the impression of inhabiting a sleepy backwater. Certainly A.E. Lawson, its Secretary for some twenty years, gave minimal signs of activity, judging by the way he handled the Annual Report for 1914: 'Among other questions dealt with by the Chamber were many arising out of the war, which it is not necessary to specify, as most of them have been dealt with in one form or another in the Press'.[1] The successes of the German raider, the Emden, in the Indian Ocean did stir the Chamber, however,[2] and it took a strong stand against enemy aliens who 'ought forthwith to be interned' as it urged upon Government,[3] expelling the three such who were Chamber members by way of good example. 1916 was a rather quiet year for the Chamber as Lawson, on leave, gave way to T.E. Welby who was now Acting Secretary.[4] In 1917, however, with Welby still 'acting' but now well established in office, (he became Secretary officially in December, following Lawson's resignation), the Chamber began to wake up. By that date the problems of the war period were beginning to bite and the Chamber was found protesting about the increased duty on cloth imports, seeking new outlets as the Russian Revolution brought trade

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1. Madras C/Comm Report 1914, xv. The Chamber's Centenary Handbook continued the tradition and capsulated its wartime activities into: 'The years 1914 - 1919 saw the Chamber preoccupied with war conditions and the problems they raised'.

2, In mid-September 1914 the German light cruiser Emden had sunk a vessel which had just sailed from Madras, and onto which cargo bound for Britain had been transferred from another ship by Government order. (The owners of the transferred and now lost goods, had not been given prior notification of the change and so had not taken out covering insurance. In a long drawn out claim against the shipowners they were unable to obtain legal redress and finally abandoned the attempt.) To add insult to injury the Emden had also bombarded Madras and sunk five other ships in 'a flying raid into the Bay of Bengal'. See Madras Times 17-23.9.1914, Englishman 16.9.1914, and London C/Comm Reports 1915, 66 and 1916, 51-2.

3. Madras C/Comm Report 1915, ix.

4. Welby combined his work at the Chamber with that of editing the Madras Mail.

with that country to a halt, and closely concerning itself with tea industry controls through its seat on the Indian Tea Cess Committee. The link with UPASI, who had a seat on the same Committee, was strengthened when that body was accorded the privilege in March 1918 of nominating a representative as an Honorary Member of the Chamber. Though the Chamber had long sought 'to keep aloof from political controversies', it could not ignore the activities of Mrs Besant and the Home Rule League on its doorstep, and in 1917 it was violently agitated by the impending release from prison of Mrs Besant and her colleagues proposed by the Madras Government. The Chamber vigorously supported by the Madras Trades Association,[1] protested strongly against any such move to both the Indian and Home Governments, and the arrival of Montagu to take soundings about future constitutional reforms served to keep its new political awareness very much alive.[2] Though the Chamber had only 46 members in 1918 and in that year lost the ambitious Welby, who resigned in May to take office with the now vigorous European Association,[3] it was to continue to be active in the political field in the immediate post war years.

Both the great Bombay and Bengal Chambers with their memberships of some 130 and 210[4] were even busier than ever throughout the war years and into the post-war years of re-adjustment, as their voluminous Reports show.[5] The range of the

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1. Between them they canvassed widely for help among other Chambers and Trade bodies.

2. Madras C/Comm Reports 1916-1918. The new demonstration of dynamism shown by the Madras Chamber was probably due to its Secretary Welby. As Hassaan, 203, notes, in 1916 Welby's paper the Madras Mail had pleaded for a political association to be formed in London in support of non-official British interests in India, whilst the European Association's agitation against Mrs Besant's release had been organised, it was inferred, 'more or less' by the Madras Mail.

3. Welby was temporarily succeeded by W.D. St. Leger until O. Kershaw was appointed Secretary in 1919.

4. Membership strengths in 1916.

5. Reports of the Bengal and Bombay Chambers 1914-1920. For selective accounts of the activities of these Chambers in the period see Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., ch. IX, and Sulivan, ch. XIV.

issues with which they were involved was extraordinarily wide, from politics and administration at the widest level through the Legislative Councils membership[1] to every type of local and commercial matter. Thus in the comparatively routine year 1916 the Bombay Chamber dealt with the topic of State versus company managed railways, the importation of incandescent candles, the prohibition of cotton yarn imports into the United Kingdom, and proposed amendments to Indian banking legislation, while the Bengal Chamber, after the excitement of the gubernatorial laying of the corner-stone of its future headquarters in the new Royal Exchange Building, settled down to a consideration of a trade marks law, Calcutta Customs House matters, the Indian Ports Act, the cost of electric current in Calcutta and state technical scholarships. The Industrial Commission enquiry also pre-occupied both these Chambers greatly, the Bengal Chamber emphasising to the Commission that it was skill rather than capital which was the main required need.[2] In 1918, the year the new Royal Exchange was opened, it was the Indian Constitutional Reforms which occupied much of their time, though in the midst of consideration of new municipal legislation for Calcutta, excess profits tax on businesses, the role of Trade Commissioners in India and plans for a uniform excise system for the country. Thereafter, as has already been seen, both Chambers were much concerned with the readjustment to peacetime conditions - the dismantling of controls, fluctuating exchange rates (the rupee had gone up from 1s.4d. to 1s.10d.)[3] and the re-establishment of world trading patterns.

In the international field there were other contacts to be made or renewed. In 1919 (Sir) Alexander Murray, Vice

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1. In practice the Deputy Chairman or Vice President represented their respective Chambers in the provincial Councils whilst in the case of Bombay the Chairman (men such as the prominent merchants M.F. Reid and M.N. Hogg) and of Calcutta the President (such business leaders in the period as F.H. Stewart and W.A. Ironside) sat in the Imperial Council.

2. Tyson, The Bengal Chamber ..., 117-8.

3. See Anstey 420-1 and Sulivan 205ff. A committee (the Babington-Smith Committee on Indian Finance and Currency) was appointed in 1919 to enquire into the currency system with the special object of re-establishing the stability of exchange.

President of the Bengal Chamber, attended the first International Labour Conference held in America on behalf of India's employers of factory labour. In the following year Chamber delegates attended the ninth of the continuing series of British Empire Chambers of Commerce congresses, held in 1920 at Toronto, and both at Bombay and Calcutta plans for the establishment of an International Chamber of Commerce were followed with much interest, while at a Calcutta conference in January 1920 approval was given to the creation of a regional organisation - the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India[1] and Ceylon,[2] matched later in the year by the formation of the Employers Federation of India, a response to post-war labour problems in which many individual and corporate members of the various Chambers were much involved.[3]

For the domiciled British and Anglo-Indians the war had been an occasion to stress their loyalty and links with the Home Country. (The Anglo-Indians, in adopting that style rather than the older 'Eurasian' had already by a semantic slight- of-hand moved England-wards.) Their reward was Government's recognition of their special loyalty by the formation of an Anglo-Indian force of their own.

The Anglo-Indian community had been recorded at the 1911 Census at some 100,000 strong, no large number,[4] but it was represented in 1914 by two rival organisations, one of which was in turn a federation of associations rather than a single body. This last consisted of the old Eurasian Associations which had sprung up from the 1870s and still survived

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1. Burma was included under the heading India.

2. A strong Southern India native Chamber active in Madras was already in being, and with other active Chambers in existence in Calcutta, and a dozen such already affiliated together in Bombay by 1918 (see Punjab C/Comm Report 1918, 290), the Indian Chambers were able to establish a counterpart Indian Federation in 1927.

3. Wages had tailed well behind sharp price rises and strikes were to break out in the mills of Bombay and Madras, on the railways and in local utility enterprises, with Calcutta amongst other towns also drawn in.

4. By 1921 this had increased to 113,000, but Anglo-Indians and domiciled British hidden in the Census figures for Europeans had apparently dropped in the decade from over 60,000 to 45,000. Census of India, 1921, I ... Report, 104-5, 231.

in Calcutta, Madras and Allahabad.[1] The oldest, at Calcutta, under such leaders as W.H. Arden Wood and A.C. Atkinson[2] both of La Martinière College, was an ineffectual body - though distinguished by having a London branch.[3] It had been given a membership fillip by the patriotic stirrings of wartime and the prospect of an Anglo-Indian regiment,[4] and by the possibility of establishing an Anglo-Indian university,[5] but it nevertheless carried little weight. Indeed, when Bishop Lefroy at Calcutta secured the appointment of a committee in 1918 to review the condition and needs of the community, its findings were such as to wring from the Statesman the comment that the community was 'not merely depressed but depressing'.[6]

The Anglo-Indian Association of Southern India with its headquarters at the White Memorial Hall at Egmore, Madras, was a much more substantial body with a membership which rose to 1,826 by the close of 1914,[7] active in various wartime causes, in education, in running a members' co-operative society. Even so it was perhaps the extensive light social programme which it provided which kept its membership so high. It was sufficiently flourishing, however, to be able

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1. See Eurasian 13.3.1909 and Thacker's 1914.

2. Thacker's 1914, 1916, 1919. The elderly W.C. Madge fell from popularity and resigned from the Association in 1917. See Statesman 17.3.1917.

3. Statesman (weekly), 23.4.1914. The branch had grown out of the efforts of one Klemin Schmidt, assisted by W.C. Madge during the latter's visit to England in 1913.

4. Ibid. 23.7.1915., 14.4.1916.

5. The Government of India Education Department had issued a circular late in 1916 on European education in India which had reviewed progress since the 1912 Simla Conference. Whilst however several new universities had been formed in the quinquennium from 1913, Government opposed the idea of an Anglo-Indian university. See Madras Mail (weekly), 5.1.1917., Nurullah and Naik, 504, and H. Sharp, Progress of Education in India 1912-1917, I, 189-90.

6. Statesman (weekly), 23.4.1919 and 18.2.1920.

7. Madras Mail, 1.4.1915. At the end of 1918 it still had 844 members on its rolls. Ibid. (weekly), 24.4.1919.

to attract a succession of prominent 'European' personalities to serve as its Presidents and Vice Presidents: from 1914 to 1919 T. Richmond, a High Court advocate and member of the Madras Legislative Council, served as President, and A.E. Rencontre, an attorney, was perhaps the most prominent Vice President. The Madras Association was also represented in the Federal Council of the Federation of Anglo-Indian Associations, which linked the Calcutta, Madras and Allahabad Associations together and its journal the Anglo-Indian became that of the federated body.[1]

It was not the Federation, however, but the Anglo-Indian Empire League, which had emerged from the Anglo-Indian Empire Association[2] which was the effective all-Indian representative of the community. By 1913 it had expanded very rapidly under the dynamic leadership of J.H. Abbott[3] at Jhansi.[4] With Abbott as President-in-Chief, Webb at Karachi and J.E. Du Bern (French consular agent) in Rangoon as Vice Presidents and A.T. Leonard at Bombay as General Secretary, the League by 1916 had established forty one district branches and had a total membership of 3,800.[5] There had been a successful (sixth annual) Conference at Bombay in 1915, busy with war matters, the setting up of a death benefit fund and proposals for an Anglo-Indian college at Allahabad and an Anglo-Indian settlement, and in 1916 the League felt confident enough to consider a League-Federated Association amalgamation.[6]

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1. Madras Times 20.4.1914, Madras Mail 1.4.1915, 19.2.1918 and ibid. (weekly) 24.3.1916, 2.3.1917.

2. In 1909, in Bombay.

3. A successful building contractor and farm owner. He succeeded W.C. Madge as the domiciled community representative on the Imperial Legislative Council.

4. The rapid expansion had been marked from its start. Rejecting the suggestion of the 34 membered Calcutta Anglo-Indian Association that he might join it, in the two months to September 1909 Abbott enrolled 200 members for the League with a promise of a further 300 by the end of the month. Anglo-Indian Empire, 4.9.1909.

5. Anglo-Indian Review January 1916, Madras Mail (weekly) 7.1.1916.

6. Review ibid., Mail (weekly) ibid. and 29.12.1916.

The issue was discussed again in the two following years, a step in its direction taken in October 1917 with the establishment of a Domiciled European and Anglo-Indian Federation[1] and at the conference in Allahabad in December 1918 - January 1919 the merger was agreed in principle. In the summer of 1919 the Anglo-Indian and Domiciled European Association emerged, a united, all-India body.[2] From 1920 under (Sir) Henry Gidney, a past member of the Indian Medical service, the new body began an active career, co-operating with the European Association much more closely than any Anglo-Indian body had done for many years.[3]

The Anglo-Indians had started a branch in Britain just prior to the war, but the timing was inauspicious for its growth. The impact of the war years was also felt in the activities of other bodies in Britain connected with India. For the commercial bodies, the ITA(L), the London Chamber and others, negotiations with government on behalf of Indian commercial interests upon the maze of wartime controls were both protracted and complicated; for the missionary bodies the problem was to sustain where they had hoped to expand their work in India. The liberal-minded secular groups were also affected. To the National Indian Association, sharing offices with the Northbrook Society at 21, Cromwell Road in a house leased from the India Office, the war led to a restriction of its regular social programme, but there were new activities in compensation - charitable

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1. The new Federation, also confusingly referred to as the Federal Council, was formed with the object of transacting 'all Imperial Communal purposes' and most immediately for the purpose of presenting a united community front in the impending enquiries on constitutional reforms. See Montagu C. MSS.Eur.D.523/35, Addresses presented at Delhi.

2. Madras Mail 1.1.1920, Rangoon Times (weekly) 26.4.1919, Anthony, 123. Rifts, however, were to prevent the agreed amalgamation from cementing in practice, Calcutta's Anglo-Indian Association albeit with a change of name thus retained its separate status, (see Englishman 26.8.1920), whilst the strong Southern India Association in Madras was never a party to the amalgamation scheme.

3. Life of Sir Henry Gidney, 32, 36, European Association Quarterly Review, March 1922, February 1923.

and welfare work on behalf of Indian soldiers and hospitality to Indian servicemen on leave.[1] (The pent-up flood of Indian students, many women among them, which flowed into Britain after the declaration of peace was to be the NIA's first major post-war consideration.)[2] For the East India Association, in Victoria Street, the major impact of the war was the loss of its 'pivotal' clerk on army duties, and the difficulties of moving to new premises in view of military requisitions of office space. It carried on with occasional debates and circulation of literature on Indian affairs but, true to its neutral stance, refused to involve itself in the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms.[3] No such qualms were felt by those gathered around Sir William Wedderburn in the British Committee of Congress which continued to campaign in Britain on behalf of Indian nationalist interests[4] - presumably to the irritation of the European Association in India.

For the European Association the war years were a time of growth, of final re-emergence as a major pressure group. Revitalised by Dudley Myers, re-organised, renamed, by 1914 it had eleven branches and verging on 3,000 members. Under the presidency of his successor L.P.E. Pugh it also began publication of its own journal. On the outbreak of war it abandoned its plans to protest about such matters as the British Finance Bill[5] and turned its full attention to loyal support for the war effort. Its Auxiliary Service Committee was active in promoting the cause of Volunteering and from 1915 in pressing for the compulsory military training of the European community in India. (By then at least 176 Association members were on active service.) It also gave

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1. NIA P. MSS.Eur.F.147/11, Council progs. 15.7.1914, ibid. 147/12 Council progs. 17.2.1915, 16.2.1916, 21.2.1917.

2. NIA P. MSS.Eur.F.147/13, Council progs. 19.2.1920.

3. East India Association P. MSS.Eur.F.147/30, Council progs. 1914-18.

4. Ratcliffe, chs. V and VIII.

5. The passing of the 1914 Bill in unaltered form would have made Britons with earnings in India liable to double taxation.

sympathetic support to a proposal from Myers, now in England engaged in hospital welfare work, for the employment of war disabled servicemen in India. And the Association was active in pressing Government to counter German-inspired propaganda in India, and to deal toughly with enemy businesses and enemy aliens, missionaries included. (However when it pressed in 1915 for the dismissal of the Viceroy's bandmaster Herr Büchner, the Home Department gave the very cool reply: 'the Government of India regret that they are not prepared to discuss individual cases of this nature with the European Association'.)[1]

War-related issues were the Association's main preoccupation, but under Presidents G.C. Godfrey[2] and Sir Archy Birkmyre it continued its drive for membership initiating a special campaign in Calcutta in 1916 with good results. From 2,931 members in 1913[3] its numbers rose yearly,[4] reaching 4,241 in 1916,[5] and thanks notably to a variety of donations its financial position also became much easier. With this strengthened support it approached Government in July 1916 with a renewed plea for representation in the Imperial Legislative Council, and though refused, it claimed in its address of welcome in December that year to the new viceroy Lord Chelmsford[6] the right of 'frankly criticising Government measures and policy'. It had in fact been thus 'frankly

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1. EA Reports 1914-1916. See also India Home Dept. Progs. Political A, Jan. 1915 nos. 98-100 and July 1915 nos. 435-46 regarding the Association's approaches for countering the prevalence of false rumours and dealing with enemy aliens and ibid. April 1916 nos. 469-70 relating to the matter of Herr Büchner.

2. Agent of the Bengal Nagpur Railway and to become India's Coal Controller.

3. From that year representatives of the Bengal Chamber and of the CTA sat on its Council.

4. 31.12.1914 - 3,308, 31.12.1915 - 3,370 (after striking off 29 members of hostile nationality).

5. Planting and Calcutta membership was particularly strong and that of Madras, Bombay and Cawnpore considerable.

6. It was his first visit to Calcutta after taking over office from Hardinge in April.

criticising' and offering its opinion on a variety of issues. It had complained sharply at the lack of consultation of public opinion in India before the India Council Bill was introduced in Parliament in 1914,[1] it supported the Bengal Chamber in the Moment affair, it offered assistance to Europeans involved in court cases, pressed that Mutiny veterans be honoured with military funerals and that all tenants of flats (as well as houses) be enfranchised by the Calcutta municipality[2] and supported the planters in the Champaran affair.[3] It was thus with an active record that in 1917 it appealed for still more members the better to urge the community's interests, and in this its thirty fifth year celebrated its political revival. 'The year under review', its Report claimed, 'marks the commencement of a new era in the history of the European Association. The European Community' as was emphasised, 'has now discarded its mantle of indifference and has committed itself irrevocably to an active participation in current Indian politics'.[4]

It was certainly time for the Association to do so for by 1917 politics in India had reached a turning point. The Indian National Congress at the onset of the war had warmly voiced its loyalty, but during the war years had pressed increasingly India's claim to dominion status. In the 1915 session it had sought 'substantial measures of reform towards the attainment of self government', and had explored means for closer co-operation with the Muslim League. That body, already torn between loyalty to Britain and to co-religionist but now enemy Turkey, was split on the question of co-operating with Congress so that its December 1915 annual meeting ended in violent disturbances and disruption of proceedings.[5]

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1. The Bill (which was eventually rejected) proposed inter alia a portfolio system in the India Council in London.

2. Tenants, whose rent were paid inclusive of rates, were not entered in the municipality books as ratepayers, and so acquired no voting rights.

3. EA Reports 1914-1917.

4. Ibid. 1916, 8; 1917, 14.

5. See report in Englishman 1.1.1916.

But the wish of those anxious to co-operate with Congress prevailed, and as those Congress extremists who had split away in 1907 at Surat now came back into the fold, the 1916 session of Congress at Lucknow was a more united and representative body of nationalists than for many years. It proceeded not only to approve a resolution calling for an urgent measure of self-government for India, but to ratify the Lucknow Pact which embodied a practical compromise between Congress and League leaders on a constitutional pattern for such a measure of self-government.[1] The strong support given to the Home Rule Leagues in India in 1917[2] and Montagu's famous declaration on 20 August of the long-term goal of a constitutional reform in India[3] alike made clear how rapidly the winds of war had altered the political climate in India.

Reactions of protest against Montagu's initiative and of anger at the release from prison of Mrs Besant and her Home Rule League colleagues[4] kept the European Association in a fever of anxiety in the autumn of 1917. The nostalgic highlight of the reaction to Mrs Besant's release was the packed Extraordinary General Meeting of the Association at the Dalhousie Institute on 26 September. Over a thousand Europeans attended,[5] Montagu's name was hissed whenever

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1. See C.F. Andrews and G.K. Mookerjee, The Rise and Growth of Congress in India, 150-4, Argov ch. V, Bahadur, The Muslim League ..., chs. 4-5.

2. Tilak had formed his League in April 1916 and Mrs Besant hers (with G.S. Arundale, the Theosophist, teacher and journalist, as Organising Secretary) that September. For a study of the Leagues see H.F. Owen, 'Towards Nation-Wide Agitation and Organisation: The Home Rule Leagues, 1915-18', in D.A. Low ed., Soundings in Modern South Asian History.

3. Government's declared policy was 'that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'. It had been decided to take 'substantial steps in this direction ... as soon as possible'.

4. Mrs Besant, Arundale and B.P. Wadia who had been interned since June, were released from internment on 17 September. Annie Besant, now at the height of her popularity, was to become Congress President in December.

5. For proceedings see Englishman 27.9.1917. As the EA Report 1917 noted: 'The hall was full to overflowing, hundreds of new members having joined in order to be present'.

mentioned and solidarity was loudly voiced with the recent, diehard speeches of Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Sir Hugh Bray in the Imperial Legislative Council.[1] Shortly afterwards a conference was held in Calcutta on 5 and 6 November with EA branch representatives attending to thrash out the form of a memorandum[2] to be presented to Government setting out the Association's view on the changes envisaged in the 20 August declaration. A week later, on the 12th, the Memorandum was agreed and signed,[3] and on 7 December it was presented to the Viceroy and to the Secretary of State, who had arrived in India in November,[4] in a private interview granted to President Birkmyre and to four other members of the European Association Council.[5] At much the same time the Council took care to disassociate themselves from the Joint Address, presented under the signature of the lawyers A.J. Pugh, Vice Chairman of the EA's Calcutta branch, and S.R. Das.[6] Montagu brushed aside the opposition to reform voiced by the non-official Europeans and disregarded the protests of the European Association.[7]

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1. The Punjab Lieutenant-Governor O'Dwyer had critically contrasted the admirable war record of the loyal Punjabis with that of political agitators elsewhere in India. Bray, the Bengal Chamber's President, had been sharply critical in Council of the projected reforms. See Leg. Cl. progs. 13.9. and 20.9.1917.

2. Called for by the September meeting.

3. 'A grant of anything approaching self-government in India at the present time would be utterly disastrous' it warned, though certain reforms 'particularly decentralisation and the spread of education' found its support. With its prime duty towards its own community, the EA, of course, did 'not consider itself called upon to put forward any detailed proposals towards the progressive realisation of responsible government in India'.

4. Montagu had come to undertake on the spot enquiries and discussions on the envisaged reforms and stayed till April 1918.

5. EA Report 1917, 25, Montagu C. MSS.Eur.D.523/34, Addresses Presented at Calcutta.

6. The Joint Address of a small group of Europeans and Indians embodied a scheme of dyarchy drawn up by Lionel Curtis, put forward as a workable method of implementing the envisaged reforms. (Curtis was the leader of the Round Table, an imperial federation movement, which had study circles in India.) For discussion of the Pugh-Das group and the Address, see Hassaan 205-9.

7. The European Association as a whole Montagu thought of as but a recent entrant into the political sphere, and the 'sensible' addresses of Bombay's Europeans, including 'an extra-ordinarily good address' from the EA branch in that town, weakened the effect of stiffer European protest elsewhere. See E.S. Montagu, An Indian Diary, 89, 157-8.

But the support which the deputation enjoyed was very clearly established by the formation of new branches in India and an almost doubling of the Association's membership, which by the close of 1917 stood at a record 7,838.[1] The reaction to the political events of the year also brought an urgent move in late August to set up an Association branch in London. As a consequence, on 30 October, at a meeting at the Cannon Street Hotel presided over by Lord Sydenham, an ultra-Conservative politician, an Indo-British Association was formed with offices at 2, Norfolk Street, Strand. (That Association, however, though maintaining close ties with the European Association, was organised as a quite independent body.)[2]

1918 was no less remarkable for the Association than 1917. Under its new President P.C. Buckland (a barrister) and a new full time Secretary T.E. Welby who had come up from Madras in July to replace Alec Marsh, the EA entered into a whirl of activity. The first half of the year was devoted to internal re-organisation,[3] the second half to 'eliciting, guiding and unifying European opinion' on the Montagu-Chelmsford reform scheme.[4] For the first time since Ilbert Bill days the Association was seen to be the foremost non-official pressure group battling to defend against radical change the jealously guarded dominance of the European community. Welby made two tours of India, much Press publicity was secured, and early in November the Association issued its Final Statement on the Reform Scheme.[5]

The Statement[6] angrily denounced the fait accompli with which it had been presented. 'The European non-official community', it bitterly noted, 'has been almost ignored in the

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1. EA Report 1917. 'Moderate' Bombay alone had come in with nearly 700 new members in the year.

2. Ibid. 9-10. The London body had been set up 'with the object of protecting the best interests in India of British and Indians alike'.

3. 1918 saw the Association move from its old premises in Grosvenor House to new offices at 31/1 Dalhousie Square, South.

4. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms. with its far-reaching dyarchy proposals, had been published in July. See P.P. 1918, VIII, [Cd. 9109.].

5. EA Report 1918, 1-11.

6. See ibid. 1918, 39-59.

scheme, in which it is often tacitly assumed that the European official and the Indian non-official are the only parties to a political settlement'.[1] It had been an error to carry out the Reforms enquiry amidst all the distractions of war. It had been misleading to present its findings to the British public without an accompanying Rowlatt Report[2] to reveal the dangers lurking beneath the calm imposed by that British authority which the Reforms proposed to weaken! It was wrong to suppose that British communal interests were less in need of protection than those of the Indian masses. However the protesting clamour of the Association and the non-official European community[3] had come too late to alter anything but the details of the Reforms - they were the price to be paid for Indian collaboration and Indian resources used during the war.[4] It was to the Southborough Committees now touring the country to work out the details of constitutional change that the European Association had to address itself.[5] It achieved some successes - securing European communal representation, over and above that granted to European business interests, and narrowing the definition of 'European' for franchise purposes so as to exclude natives technically acquiring that status in British colonies outside India[6] - but its emphatic warning against the 'great caution' needed in transferring departments

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1. Non-official Europeans had been accorded one long paragraph (commercial community) and one short paragraph (missionaries) in the 300 page Montagu-Chelmsford Report.

2. Under Mr Justice S.A.T. Rowlatt a committee had been appointed in December 1917 to investigate revolutionary conspiracies in India and to advise Government on legislation to deal effectively with them. The Sedition Committee's Report (see P.P. 1918, VIII, [Cd. 9190.]) which was published in July 1918, revealed the widespread extent of seditious outrages which had been perpetrated in India since the 1890's.

3. 'The proposed scheme of reforms goes too fast and too far' as the CTA bluntly put it, echoing the sentiments of many. CTA Report 1918, 23.

4. Tomlinson, 351-2.

5. EA Report 1918, 60-75. For Reports of the Lord Southborough committees see P.P. 1919 XVI [Cmd. 141.] and [Cmd. 103.]. The Franchise Committee dealt with franchise questions and the format of the new Council of State and Imperial and Provincial Councils, whilst the Committee on Divisions of Functions considered the allocation of subjects.

6. [Cmd. 141.], 183ff.

to Indian ministerial control[1] went unheeded. Alarm at the constitutional changes proposed, spiced with indignation at the tone of an inflammatory article in New India,[2] led to a marked rallying to the European Association - visible in enlarged membership,[3] in the long list of donations to it and the considerable number of members who volunteered to increase their subscription.[4] But the new display of solidarity no longer seemed to move Government to take note of the non-official community's views.

Though the successful conclusion of the long struggle with Germany made 1919 a year for rejoicing, the European Association's Council and the new President G. Morgan (a jute broker) shared a continuing disquiet at the Government's steady advancement of the natives.[5] When Government asked the Association's opinion on the recommendations of the Public Service Commission, the Council took the opportunity to voice their fears about the 'immensely far-reaching constitutional changes ... about to be introduced' and their strong opposition to the 'large and increasing reduction of the British element in the Service'. They, at least, could hardly see how British candidates could be recruited to the Service under such conditions.[6] And when the final pattern of the Government of India Act, 1919 was laid down it was clear that here, too, the European element had been diluted. For though

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1. EA Report 1918, 69.

2. The article, 'The Golden Age and Present Autocracy', appeared in the 12 November issue. In view of the fall from power of Russia, Austria and Germany due to the war it questioned Britain's right to maintain its autocracy in India and keep Indians as a subject race. See ibid. 101-2 and India Home Dept. Progs. Political B, Feb. 1919, nos. 150-9.

3. Up by 423 to 8,261.

4. EA Report 1918, 15, 103-119.

5. Manifestation of the disquiet was widespread in the community. The Upper India Chamber of Commerce, for example, had refused in 1911 to support the EAIDA for fuller representation of non-official Europeans and Anglo-Indians in the Legislative Councils. In 1918, however, it notably came out strongly in favour of such communal representation.

6. EA Report 1919, 116-8.

Europeans had secured more seats in the Legislative Councils, proportionately, as in 1909, Indians had gained still more. With the enlarged Burma Council included in the count Europeans had no more than 44 of the 699 elected seats in the Provincial Legislative Councils, 9 out of the 103 seats in the Indian Legislative Assembly and 3 of the 33 seats in the new Council of State.[1]

What was more deplorable was that all the unwise, unnecessary concessions to the Indians had not secured their loyalty or won their support. Their welcome to the Reforms had been grudging and lukewarm and immediately offset by universal opposition to the Rowlatt Bills[2] when introduced in February 1919. That opposition had been extended in a general hartal or stoppage of work involving large bodies of hitherto a-political people, and in their hands non-violent satyagraha had quickly turned to stone throwing, bus burning and attacks upon the police. Violence had flared from the end of March in Delhi, the Punjab and Bombay, accompanied by racial hostility and assaults on European property, most ugly in Amritsar where European banks were broken into and Europeans murdered and wounded. The non-official European community was roused to a fury of fear and indignation and loudly called on Government to impose law and order.[3] (To the non-official European the Amritsar massacres were those perpetrated by Indians on European women and men: General Dyer's firm action at Jallianwalla Bagh no more than a necessary restoration of the order.) Morgan, for the European Association, saw both the Governor of Bengal and the Viceroy and obtained their assurances that Government would act firmly.[4] C.F. Andrews, making a nuisance of himself by pressing for the release of those interned agitators the Ali

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1. See Appendix V.

2. These dealt with speedy trials for anarchists and with offences concerning seditious literature.

3, See P.P. 1920, XIV [Cmd. 534.] Report on the Punjab Disturbances, April 1919; ibid. [Cmd. 681.] (Report of the Hunter Committee of Enquiry); also Judith Brown ch. 5, M. O'Dwyer, India as I Knew It 1885-1925, ch. XVII, and European Press generally of the period.

4. EA Report 1919, 12-17.

brothers and trying to get to Amritsar to investigate Jallianwalla himself was put under close surveillance. Horniman, the radical Bombay editor so long a thorn in Government's flesh, was actually deported.[1] The chorus of angry European voices was made still louder - and more shrill - by the admission of women now as members of the European Association in their own right. As in Ilbert Bill days they readily came forward and proved themselves ardently communal. It was the memsahibs who collected so busily for the General Dyer fund when that champion was 'thrown ... to the jackals' by the Army Council for his action in Amritsar, and some 6,200 of them signed the petition sent to the Prime Minister in London protesting at his treatment by the authorities.[2] But not even these reinforcements could turn the tide in the battle against the reforms. Nor could Welby, sent to London to present the European Association's case against them to the Joint Select Committee set up to review the reform proposals. He tried with some success to influence journalists, public men and MPs to support the non-official community's stand and he secured considerable publicity. He also set out fully to the Select Committee the grounds of his Association's opposition to the reforms. The Committee, however, with the views of the European Association in India and of the Indo-British Association before it chose to adopt almost without change the reform proposals of 1918.[3]

The passing of the Government of India Act on 23 December 1919 marked, as the King's Proclamation put it, 'another epoch ... in the annals of India'. And the manner of its passing, unchanged except in minor detail, also marked the eclipse of the non-official community as a major influence in the politics of India. Even when a revitalised European Association, supported by such bodies as the Indo-British

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1. India Home Dept. Progs. Political Deposit, July 1919, No. 15 and ibid. Political-A, May 1919, no. 630.

2. Englishman 31.1.1919 and 2.7., 10.7., 14.7., 26.7. and 23.8.1920.

3. EA Report 1919, 7-11, Hassaan 315-16.

Association at home,[1] exerted its full strength of numbers, it could not move Government. Ripon had cracked under the pressure of the non-official European community. His successors had handled issues affecting the community with the utmost care. But in 1919-1920 the community no longer had the power to mould events to its will. Rather it was pushed aside, sacrificed to the larger imperial needs of Government. The words of the Chairman of the Burma Chamber of Commerce making his survey of the events of 1919[2] were very banal - but very true: 'It is no use attempting to disguise the fact that things are not going to be the same in India in the future as they have been in the past'.

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1. For the activities of the Indo-British Association and other 'right-wing bodies' in Britain see Hassaan ch. V.

2. See Rangoon Times (weekly), 28.2.1920.

APPENDIX I

EUROPEAN AND ANGLO-INDIAN DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

An Association has been formed in India for the protection of the Political and Material Rights individual and collective of Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

It is proposed to place the Association on a permanent footing, and that it should act as a standing vigilant Committee both in England and in India for protecting from invasion and destruction the rights and interests of Europeans and Anglo-Indians.

It is felt that at the present time by an Association of the kind above it is possible successfully to resist the constantly progressive attacks which are being made to undermine and destroy the rights which it is by this means sought to protect.

A large and representative Committee has been appointed to organise and formulate the details of the Association, and a full prospectus will shortly be published.

The Bank of Bengal is prepared to receive subscriptions in Calcutta and at all its various Branches in the Mofussil. Local Committees will be formed in the Mofussil to collect subscriptions.

All subscriptions received will be acknowledged in the Englishman and Indian Daily News.

These subscriptions will be applied in the first place to cover the expenses of opposing by every possible legitimate means both in England and in India the immediate proposal of the Government to subject European British subjects to the jurisdiction of Native Magistrates. All surplus funds will be invested in securities and vested either in the Official Trustee of Bengal or in other Trustees, and the income applied to carrying out the objects of the Association.

All intending subscribers are required to send in their subscriptions to the Bank of Bengal at once.

Notice in Englishman 9 March 1883 relating to the formation of the Defence Association.

APPENDIX II

THE EUROPEAN AND ANGLO-INDIAN DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

...

The following is the prospectus of the Association:-

This Association has been formed to watch over and protect the interests and promote the welfare of the following classes of persons in India, namely, - Europeans of whatever nationality, Anglo-Indians, European British subjects not falling within either of these denominations, Americans, Armenians, Eurasians and others associated with Europeans by a community of sympathies and interests.

It is felt that the establishment of a body that shall adequately represent the classes thus indicated and from the wide basis on which it rests and the solid interests which it promotes, shall contain within itself the elements of strength and permanence, has become an urgent necessity.

...

The objects which the Association proposes to itself are threefold in character:- I. Political, II. Benevolent, and III. Economic.

I. - POLITICAL

(a.) - To collect and bring to a focus the opinions of the classes whom it represents, or any section of them, on all matters affecting their welfare, and thus endeavour to secure them a more effective voice than they at present possess in the counsels of the country.

(b.) - To watch the operation of existing Laws, Rules and Institutions, in the interests of the communities whom it represents...

(c.) - To watch the action of the Legislature in India, and of Parliament so far as it affects India ... [and make] representations as circumstances may ... require.

(d.) - To discharge the same functions in respect of the administrative action of the Government, whether in India or in England.

(e.) - To originate and sustain, by all legitimate and constitutional means, organised action in India and England.

(f.) - To guard and defend all lawful rights and privileges, and promote the removal of unjust disabilities, of the classes whose interests it is the care of the Association to promote.

II. - BENEVOLENT

(a.) To aid by its efforts in the development of charitable and educational institutions in the interests of the aforesaid communities.

(b.) In the interests of those communities to watch the allotment, application, and working of charitable and educational grants.

III. - ECONOMIC

To promote by its efforts and representations, in the interests of the community at large, European and Anglo-Indian commercial, agricultural and industrial enterprise, and to secure such enterprise from the consequences of injurious legislation or executive interference.

In conformity with the objects of the Association, ... its first and immediate efforts will be directed to the preservation of the right of European British subjects resident in India, beyond the local jurisdiction of the Presidency High Courts to be tried only by those who are themselves European British subjects ...

It is intended to maintain the Association which has already been formed on a permanent basis both in India and in England.

It is estimated that a minimum of Rs. 3,00,000, after defraying all preliminary expenses, will be required for this purpose. Donations are therefore earnestly solicited ...

Extract from Prospectus of the Defence Association published in Englishman 30 March 1883.

APPENDIX III

EUROPEAN AND ANGLO-INDIAN DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

...

The Council also considered the present position and attitude of the Government as regards the Ilbert Bill, and, as a result of this consideration, unanimously agreed to the following resolutions:-

I. That, in the opinion of the Council of the European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association, every legislative measure, in however modified a form, which seeks to render European British subjects liable to the Criminal Jurisdiction of Native Magistrates and Judges, is vicious and obnoxious in principle, and cannot but prove oppressive and disastrous in practice.

II. That the Council have reason to believe that any further endeavour to force a measure of this description into law would be viewed as a high handed and inequitable exercise of arbitrary power; and as a wanton and deliberate affront to the collective public opinion of practically the whole European and Anglo-Indian community in India.

III. That, in the opinion of the Council, it is the duty of the Defence Association and of the whole of the European community to maintain their existing attitude of strenuous opposition to every legislative measure which shall seek to validate the principle of subordinating European British subjects to the Criminal Jurisdiction of Natives.

IV. That the legal power of the Indian Legislature to pass such an Act has been challenged, for valid reasons, by some of the ablest lawyers in India, and such power has on no occasion been affirmed by any decision of Her Majesty's Privy Council; and that, moreover, whether such legal power is vested in the Legislative Council, or not, special class legislation of this character, when divested of the sanction of the community against which its provisions are directed, would necessarily, in public estimation, be deprived of political, moral, and equitable obligation, and consequently as a measure of public utility would stand self-condemned as morally inefficient and politically inoperative.

V. That it is, therefore, the opinion of the Council that, in the event of any such measure being enacted, it will

be the duty of the Anglo-Indian community in India, until such time as such measure shall have been duly repealed, to endeavour to minimise its injustice by collectively aiding with funds and moral support every member of the community, whatsoever his position in life, who shall exercise his right of refusing to plead to a Criminal Jurisdiction which has been all but universally condemned by collective Anglo-Indian public opinion, as an unprovoked, inequitable, and capricious invasion of the existing status of European British subjects in India.

Extract from Englishman 1 October 1883 giving text of five resolutions passed by Defence Association Council on 28 September.

APPENDIX IV

LORD RIPON AND THE BEHAR MOUNTED RIFLES

A London gossip relates the following remarkable story: . . . The situation stood thus: . . . there was but one subject of interest for the European population of Calcutta. Would Lord Ripon insist upon pressing the Ilbert Bill in all its objectionable entirety, or would he give way enough to take the sting out of it? . . . .

. . . At that moment the Behar Mounted Rifles had come down to the capital for their annual military outing. I dare not add orgie, because I would not for [the] world libel the gallant corps. Who are the Behar Mounted Rifles? They are indigo planters in Tirhut. Some of them are tea gardens further north . . . These were the men who, just two years ago, to the number of several hundred strong . . . were parading the hotel smoke-rooms, the billiard rooms, and the theatres of Calcutta. Every one of them had a personal grievance against Lord Ripon, on account of his action with reference to the Ilbert Bill . . . .

And it fell out thus: At a secret conclave which took place just about Christmas time, two years ago . . . a select circle of the Behar men had much dined and wined. In the company was an old man whose memory of Viceroys extended far back . . . The old man related the story of a Viceroy who was very unpopular in Bengal, and whom it was, therefore, resolved to "deport." Naturally the idea suggested itself of making history repeat itself. Had Lord Ripon not opportunely repented . . . this is what would have happened. There was a swift steam launch lying off the Prinsep Ghaut far away, down the Hughli. At the Sandheads a big ship, with steam up, was in waiting for the arrival of the steam launch. She had been chartered for a month by means of the combined subscriptions of a dozen of the wealthier of the Behar men. Had the Viceroy persisted in forcing the Ilbert Bill through the Council, a small body of picked Behar Mounted Rifles would, shortly after midnight, have made their way to Government House, where only a native guard was on duty. Easily disarming the sepoys as they would have done, it would only have remained for them to put the dear old Viceroy into a gharry, . . . drive him down to the ghaut, put him aboard the steam launch, take him down to the Sandheads, and before anyone in Calcutta was any the wiser, give him a breath of fresh air . . . The only object of this beautiful little conspiracy was to show his lordship that his presence at that particular moment was not considered desirable in India. A week or two after his enforced departure from Calcutta he would have been landed in some beautiful port in New Zealand, or Java, or Japan, or Jupiter, where he would have had unlimited opportunities of studying the problem of reconciling the Western and the Eastern civilisations.

Extract from Englishman, 23.3.1886

APPENDIX V

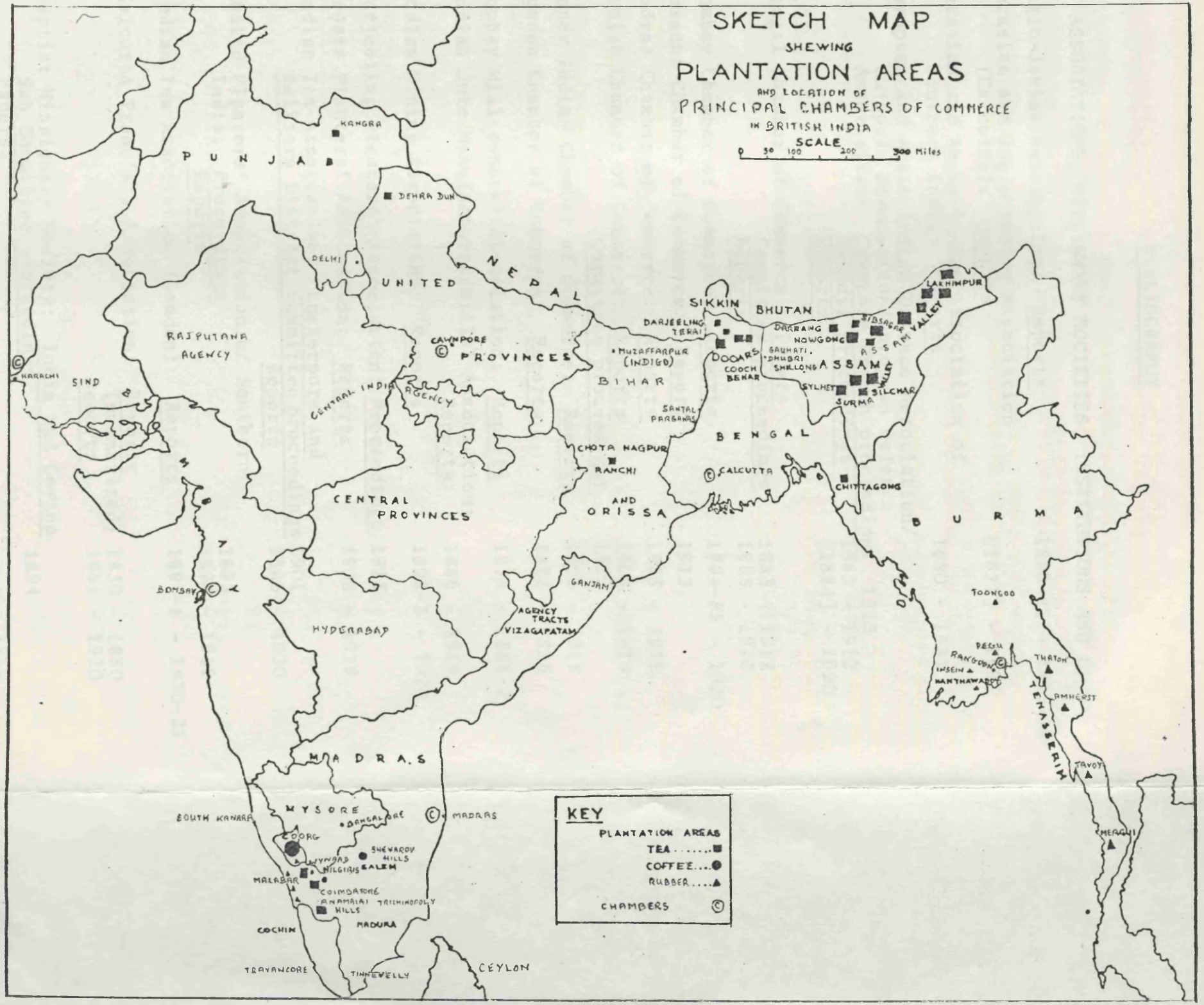
PARTIAL BREAKDOWN OF NEW INDIAN LEGISLATURES SET UP 1920-1922

I. Provincial Legislative Councils	Members			European representation among Elected Members	
	Elected	Nominated	Total	Total	Details
Madras	98	29	127	5	Chamber 2, Trades, Planters and Europeans 1 each.
Bombay	86	25	111	6	Chambers - Bombay 2, Karachi 1; Trades 1, Europeans 2.
Bengal	113	26	139	16	Chamber 6, IJMA 2, ITA, IMA, CTA 1 each Europeans 5.
United Provinces	100	23	123	3	Chamber 2, Europeans 1.
Punjab	71	22	93	1	Chamber and Trades 1
Bihar and Orissa	76	27	103	3	Planters, IMA and Europeans 1 each.
Central Provinces	37	33	70	1	Mining 1.
Assam	39	14	53	5	Planters 5.
Burma	79	24	103	4	Chamber 2, Trades and Europeans 1 each
Total	699	223	922	44	
II. Indian Legislative Assembly	103	41	144	9	Europeans - Bengal 3 Bombay 2, Madras, UP, Assam and Burma 1 each.
III. Council of State	33	27	60	3	Chambers - Bombay, Bengal, Burma 1 each.

Notes: 1) New general European communal constituencies were brought into being by the Government of India Act, 1919.

2) Except in the case of a joint seat with the Anglo-Indians in the Central Provinces Europeans had no automatic rights to any nominated seats.

Sources: P.P. 1920, XXXV, [Cmds. 812., 813.], and ibid. 1922, XVI, [Cmd. 1672.].


SKETCH MAP
SHEWING
PLANTATION AREAS
AND LOCATION OF
PRINCIPAL CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE
IN BRITISH INDIA
SCALE
0 50 100 200 300 Miles
KANGRA
PUNJAB
DEHRA DUN
DELHI
UNITED PROVINCES
NEPAL
SIKKIM
BHUTAN
DARJEELING TERAI
DOOARS
COOCH BEHAR
DARRANG
NOWGONG
SIBSAGAR
LAKHIMPUR
ASSAM VALLEY
GAUHATI
DHUBRI
SHILLONG
ASSAM
SYLHET
SILCHAR
SURMA VALLEY
MUZAFFARPUR (INDIGO)
BIHAR
CAWNPORE
RAJPUTANA AGENCY
KARACHI
SIND
CENTRAL INDIA AGENCY
SANTAL PARGANAS
BENGAL
CHOTA NAGPUR
RANCHI
CALCUTTA
CHITTAGONG
CENTRAL PROVINCES
AND ORISSA
BURMA
BOMBAY
GANJAM
AGENCY TRACTS VIZAGAPATAM
HYDERABAD
TOUNGOO
PEGU
RANGOON
INSEIN
HANTHAWADDY
THATON
AMHERST
TENASSERIM
TAVOY
MERGUI
MADRAS
MYSORE
BANGALORE
MADRAS
SOUTH KANARA
COORG
NILGIRIS
SHEVAROY HILLS
SALEM
MALABAR
COIMBATORE
ANAMALAI HILLS
TRICHINOPOLY
MADURA
COCHIN
TRAVANCORE
TINNEVELLY
CEYLON
KEY
PLANTATION AREAS
TEA
COFFEE
RUBBER
CHAMBERS

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